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ADULT SIBLING GRIEF IN THE ELEVEN YEARS
AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of
Montclair State University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

VINCENT S. VIGLIONE

Montclair State University

Upper Montclair, NJ

2013

Dissertation Chair: Catherine B. Roland, Ed.D.

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MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

We hereby approve the Dissertation

ADULT SIBLING GRIEF IN THE ELEVEN YEARS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

of

Vincent S. Viglione

Candidate for the Degree:

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation Committee:

Department of Counseling &
Educational Leadership

Catherine B. Roland, Ed.D.
Dissertation Chair

Certified by:

[Redacted Signature]

Dr. Joan C. Ficke
Dean of The Graduate School

[Redacted Signature]

Dana Heller Levitt, Ph.D.

4/29/13
Date

[Redacted Signature]

Leslie Kooyman, Ph.D.

[Redacted Signature]

Kathryn Herr, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

ADULT SIBLING GRIEF IN THE ELEVEN YEARS AFTER SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

by Vincent S. Viglione

This is a qualitative study probing the lived experience of 11 individuals (Siblings of 9/11) who lost their siblings in the terror attacks of September 11, 2001. The study is grief-oriented with a focus on 1) the journey of 11 years from the initial tragedy and loss; 2) the grief process relative to such a publicized and memorialized event; 3) the ambiguous nature of the loss as it pertains to the Siblings of 9/11 and 4) the mean-making these individuals have established over their 11 year journeys.

Main findings: 1) Ambiguity in the grief process was quite common in the experience of the Siblings of 9/11 and was exacerbated by the public nature and intense scrutiny of 9/11. Ambiguity resulted largely from the absence of physical remains, the lack of conventional rituals that mark the reality of the death and the beginning of the time of mourning, and the loss of traditional resting places. 2) In the 11 years after 9/11, the siblings of 9/11 were aware of many points of connectedness and severance that necessitated the renegotiation of family roles, sources of support and the need to maintain a psychological bond to the deceased in the absence of a physical one. 3) As the Siblings of 9/11 moved through the grief process over the 11 years journey, they recognized that meaning-making and acceptance were intensely personal undertakings. In the final analysis, it was understood that there can be no definitive resolution to the grief process of the Siblings of 9/11.

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I would like to offer my thanks to my cohort who are the first cohort, and those of the second cohort with whom I have worked throughout the doctoral program for their unequalled support, courage, commiseration, encouragement and good fellowship; to Amy Zavadil, my “critical friend,” for challenging me to rethink and rethink again my emergent themes and timelines; and to Kathy Mangano who walked this journey with me from day one offering friendship, laughter and the space to decompress.

I would like to thank Arnie Karotkin of *911-list-serv* and Bill Doyle of *wdoyle-911-support-group* who were gracious enough to post my research invitation on their respective listservs. I would also thank the numerous respondents to that invitation with

special emphasis on the eleven final participants who bravely sat with me for hours and told their incredible stories. I will forever be in awe of their courage.

I would like to especially thank my wife, Loretta, whose patience, perseverance and love afforded me the quiet time and place to do my work with the knowledge and confidence that she would see to those things that I could not. I thank my sons, Jason and Mark, for the love and pride they showed me even in those times when I could not be available. I expressly thank Jason for his fine editing of the first three chapters of this dissertation.

Mostly importantly, I would be remiss if I did not mention the nearly 3,000 people we lost on September 11, 2001. Their memories will live forever in the hearts of those of us who will continue to mourn them all of our days.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory and bravery of Firefighter Tommy Sabella of Ladder Company 13, Engine Company 22, Battalion 10 of the FDNY, fallen in the line of duty on September 11, 2001 along with 342 of his comrades, as well as to all those who perished on the day forever known as 9/11.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Death is universal. To say that is to acknowledge it as a universal part of the human experience, as well as an integral part of life itself. It takes many diverse forms and occurs in many contexts. As such, grief, the human reaction to death, embraces a uniqueness that is both observed and obscured. There are many different forms loss can take and the ensuing reactions are dependent on the mode. A loss of any kind is not an event unto itself, but is, rather, the beginning of a process that is interwoven with its form, precipitating factors or events, and context. The form in this study is murder, defined as “a crime of unlawfully killing a person especially with malice of forethought” (Webster, 1975). The precipitating event is the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terroristic attacks. The context is the subsequent trauma to the survivors, family members and the loved ones of the victims over the ensuing 11 years. According to Miller (2002):

Terrorism is the ‘perfect’ traumatic stressor because it combines the elements of malevolent intent, actual or threatened extreme harm and unending fear of the future (p. 284).

Fear of the future has morphed into fear in the present on the numerous occasions the U.S. government elevated the threat level based on real or perceived intelligence. The trauma resulting from the precipitating event remained in suspension fluctuating with, among other factors, the threat level obviating a sense of safety and, combined with the unimaginable loss, defying resolution.

September 11, 2011 marked the 10th anniversary of 9/11. More than a year has passed since that milestone. For many of the siblings of the victims (Siblings of 9/11)

this 11-year span can be viewed as a time of provisional existence, waiting for and expecting the much-overused concept of “closure.” While the grief response was immediate, for many, the loss remains ambiguous. According to Boss (1992), ambiguous loss refers to not knowing if a loved one is present or not (victims of 9/11 and other terrorist events; soldiers MIA; kidnappings). Boss (1992) states “the ‘lost’ person may be physically present but psychologically absent or, conversely, physically absent and psychologically present” (p. 1) (Alzheimer and dementia patients; amnesia sufferers). The ambiguous nature of the 9/11 loss coupled with the horrific circumstances of the siblings’ deaths; the celebrity status of and media frenzy and publicity around those deaths; and subsequent commemoration on each anniversary combine to present a unique set of circumstances to the grief process. Perhaps, within this context, there was then and may be now a lack of the clarity that is likely to accompany losses that are more definitive.

The Precipitating Event

The day started out like any other in New York City and Washington, D.C. It was a beautiful day. People went about their lives: to work, to school, to meetings, to market, to visit, or somewhere in between. At Boston’s Logan Airport, Flight 11 to Los Angeles took off at 7:59 am. Fifteen minutes later, Flight 175, also to Los Angeles, followed. At 8:20 am, Flight 77 left Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C. It, too, was headed for the West Coast. Flight 93 out of Newark Airport was delayed. Scheduled for 8:00 am, it departed at 8:41 am (Ben-Veniste, Fielding, Gorelick, Gorton, Hamilton, Kean, Kerrey & Lehman, 2004; www.history.com/topics/9-11-timeline). These were ordinary flights

taking ordinary people about their ordinary business. The sun shone brightly on the World Trade Center in New York City as Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower somewhere between the 93rd and 99th floors. Shortly after, Flight 175 flew into the South Tower. Most people can't know for sure what it is like to feel a building shudder in its death throes, to be many floors above or below the impact and to wonder "what was that?" People on the ground looked up to wonder how such an accident can happen. People many city blocks away looked on in horror as smoke billowed from the buildings, covering the city with a deathly pall. By 10:07am, Flight 77 flew into the façade of the Pentagon. Flight 93 was denied its intended target by actions of passengers and crew and hit the ground in a field in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Passengers and crew on all four flights perished along with thousands in the buildings and on the ground. It was September 11, 2001. That day became a day like no other and America became a different country. The lives of the families and friends of those who were lost in these attacks changed forever.

The attacks of September 11, 2001 were the single most devastating assault on the United States in its history with the number of dead standing at 2,973, inclusive of the three sites marked by the violence of that day (Ben-Veniste, et al., 2004). It was perpetrated by a few men in a singularly extremist act in which they were prepared to die. Confusion and uncertainty were pervasive in the first hours and throughout that first day. It persisted on many levels in the weeks and months that followed. The estimated number of dead and missing changed many times in the beginning. In the end, the number only has relevance in terms of the scope of the tragedy. As a number, it fails to convey the

essence of humanity and the glaring questions: Who was it that perished? We can safely say they were fathers and mothers; sons and daughters; husbands and wives; and children. We hear these terms used often in an effort to give some sense of the humanity of the loss, but who speaks of the siblings who were lost? Who speaks of the Siblings of 9/11 who were left to grieve for them? We have seen images and have heard stories of children, parents and spouses weary in their grief. Where are the images of siblings dealing with their profound loss? What are their stories? Have they attempted to maintain some connection to their lost siblings? Have they made meaning in the face of such tragedy and what form might that meaning have taken after 11 years?

The devastation humankind can impart upon itself does not lack in the lethal and abject power to rain devastation, often incomprehensible in purpose, upon the innocent and the unsuspecting. Humankind in its history seems to have gone to extraordinary lengths to compete with the wreckage nature, in its indifference, imposes. In the days after September 11, 2001 when the smoke started to settle and the fires were dying down, rescue efforts began and hope was still alive. When rescue morphed into recovery, we paused to wonder in the finality of it, who have we lost? That is when hope failed. That is when grief began.

Areas of Research Interest

Sibling Relations

According to Nandwana and Katock (2009), “relationship is a pattern of intermittent reactions between two people involving interchanges over an extended period of time” (p. 67). It is easy then, for us to understand that the association between

siblings can be one of life's most enduring and influential relationships. Packman et al. (2006) quote Cicirelli's (1995) characterization of sibling relationships as

The total of interactions (physical, verbal and nonverbal communication) of two or more individuals who share knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings regarding each other, from the time that one sibling becomes aware of the other (p. 4).

There is a great deal of research on the nature of sibling relationships as a construct unto itself (Brody, 1998; Conger, Stocker & McGuire, 2009; Katoch & Nandwana, 2010; Gass, Jenkins & Dunn, 2007; Moser, Jones, Zaorski, & Mirsalimi, 2005; Perner, Ruffman & Leekam, 1994), but surprisingly little on adult sibling grief and loss (Charles & Charles, 2006). Much of familial loss research has concentrated on the grief process of parents who lost children, children who have lost parents, and spousal loss. A great deal of work on sibling grief addresses the reactions of children who have lost a sibling through disease, accidents or murder.

Grief and Loss

Based on the sheer volume of books addressing the subjects of bereavement, death and dying, it is clear that dealing with these matters and finding ways to cope with the stress they impose are of intense interest. From a scholarly perspective and as the literature review will show, there is a firm foundation of research and interest in this area (Golsworthy & Coyle, 1999; Klass, 1995; Smith, McCullough & Poll, 2003; Worden, Davies & McCown, 1999; Worden, 2001). The area of ambiguous loss is represented in the literature to a lesser degree. Psychological research on the events of 9/11, the victims of the attacks, and the relatives and friends of the victims has taken the form of trauma,

grief, resilience, meaning-making and religion (Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli & Vlahov, 2006; Boss, 2004; Davis, Larson & Nolen-Hoeksema, 1998; Ellis, 2004; Healey, 2005; Marrone, 1999; Richardson, 2010; Stroebe, 2003; Worden, Davies & McCown, 1999).

In the aftermath of 9/11, many organizations recognized the overwhelming need to provide services to those who suffered a loss that day, be it a human loss or trauma arising from the tragedy itself. The theme of grief and loss was prevalent in such programs and services that were provided to deal with such issues as mental health care, healing, resilience and crisis intervention to name a few. Existing organizations such as St. Vincent's Hospital in New York City, The Living Room at the Jewish Family Service in New Jersey, Faithful Response on Long Island and The New York City Fire Department spearheaded assistance efforts for those affected. New and independent organizations such as 9-11 Healing and Remembrance Program, Voices of September 11, Families of 9/11, 911-list-serv, wdoyle-911-support-group, Tuesday's Children (9/11/01 was a Tuesday) were created expressly in reaction to 9/11 and in recognition of the need to deliver bereavement and other supportive services (www.survivorsnet.org/resources1.html ; www.9-11healingandremembrance.org; www.tuesdayschildren.org; www.nyc.gov). The array of support efforts offered in response to 9/11 is indicative of the basic human need to be reactive to loss suffered and the ensuing grief.

Adult Sibling Grief

Of the extensive body of sibling grief research that was reviewed, there was a focus on sibling loss in childhood. The research on adult sibling loss tends to be specific in the type of loss, i.e. disease (cancer, AIDS), suicide, murder and violence. Considering

the notion that 9/11 deaths may be viewed in terms of violence and murder both, this research aids in conceptualizing the attitudes and perceptions of siblings working through the grief process. Within this grief work appears the concept of a struggle to maintain a bond to the lost sibling in the altered world (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Bretherton, 1992; Charles & Charles, 2006; Cicirelli, 1989; Field, Gao & Paderna, 2006; Packman, Horsley, Davies & Kramer, 2006). However, most of the research on continuing bonds addresses that phenomenon within the context of other relational loss, most often the grief of children who have lost a parent (Packman et al., 2006).

Adult sibling grief seems to distinguish itself from other relational grief responses by incorporating the complication of disenfranchisement. In cases illustrated in the literature, the notion of sympathy reactions being directed towards the deceased's parents, spouse and children appears common and typically has a chapter devoted to this hypothesis (DeVita, 2007; White, 2008; Wray, 2003). For that reason, siblings are often expected to be strong for others in the family and put their grief on hold. These notions of delayed grief response and the expectation of being a caregiver present a challenge born of social intimidation.

Continuing Bonds

Continuing bonds refers to an ongoing attachment, to keeping alive the memories of the deceased, and considering the deceased as continuing the life journey with the bereaved. The death of a person that is significant in the life of the bereaved is a profound transition that persists on several levels. From a bio-psycho-social perspective, such a loss represents a decisive turning point in future development and functioning. Recent

research (Neimeyer, Baldwin & Gillies, 2006) indicates that encouraging the preservation and advancement of bonds with the deceased can produce positive outcomes in the grief process. While attachment theory initially referred to behavioral and psychological reactions of a child to the attachment figure (its mother), attachment theory can extend to relationships between adults where the attachment figure is each other (Field, Gao & Paderna, 2005). As such, research indicates that sibling attachment develops to a strong degree based on proximity, identity development and with the expectation that the relationship will last the longest in their lives (Packman, Horsley, Davies & Kramer, 2006). From this perspective, one can understand the major impact of sibling loss, and the effects and finality of separation at the point of death.

September 11th, 2001 (9/11)

Research on the topic of 9/11 has a broad scope from the nature of terror to psychological resilience to private grief in the public space to post-9/11 perspectives (Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli & Vlahov, 2006; Healey, 2005; Kaiser, Vick & Major, 2004; Miller, 2002). All of these factors are relevant in the lives of those who lost a loved one in 9/11, no less so for those individuals (Siblings of 9/11) who lost a sibling.

Purpose of This Study

The complexity of the general areas that were explored (Sibling Relations, Grief and Loss, Sibling Loss, Continuing Bonds and 9/11) presents a challenge to understanding the full impact of the 9/11 event as it pertains to Siblings of 9/11. Part of the challenge is to weave together the prominent research in each of these areas to present a relevant interpretation of how much we already know about the sibling grief process as

it relates to a traumatic event that is, at once, ambiguous and public. The qualitative nature of this study will bring into focus the lived experiences of participants through an interview process for a ground level, personal view of their unique grief process over the past 11 years. This study asks the overarching question:

What is the lived-in experience over the past 11 years of those who have lost a sibling on 9/11?

The literature review will confirm that the sibling relationship is an exceptional one and that sibling loss has many distinctive aspects. As such, the grief process of Siblings of 9/11 may have been more protracted because of two unique factors. Firstly, siblings may have been disenfranchised as attention was first given to spouses, children and, then, parents of the victims. Secondly, a singularly extraordinary feature for 9/11 families as a whole is that for most there are no remains. That means there is no grave, no final resting place. This feature has established an ambiguity that complicated the grief process.

It was my working hunch, then, that 9/11 families and Siblings of 9/11 in particular struggled with the ambiguity of their loss. As such, Siblings of 9/11 attempted to maintain a primary relationship through the use of continuing bonds to maintain an emotional attachment to the deceased. The development and maintenance of the continuing bonds varied widely. The connection of continuing bonds as they pertain to the Siblings of 9/11 has not been made in the literature. Probing for information on continuing bonds was applicable to my population to understand and appreciate the nature, significance and influence of such bonds that may have been created and preserved over this time.

Positionality

On the morning of September 11, 2001, with 342 of his comrades, a firefighter by the name of Tommy Sabella rushed into North Tower of the World Trade Center with one thing on his mind: to save lives. He and 8 others of Ladder Company 13 perished. The remains of eight were found. Tommy's remains were not. He was my wife's kid brother, a young man with a young wife and two young children with a world full of promise to live for. When I first started dating my wife, Tommy was just eleven years old. I played ball with him in the street, helped him with his homework, and took him for rides in my sports car – to the Jersey Shore, to hockey games, to his first camping trip. He became my kid brother. Prior to that, I was an only child.

My interests in the grief process, in sibling relations and the events of September 11, 2001 rise from personal history and experience. My research interests prompt me to seek an understanding of how siblings conceptualize the myriad conditions of loss in the face of their grief. I have completed an extensive search of the literature around themes that include sibling relations and grief and loss. Together, they comprise the overarching theme of sibling grief. In the eleven years since 9/11, my experience with Families of 9/11 has made it abundantly clear that there exists an undying and uncompromised effort to maintain some emotional connection to the deceased in lieu of the now missing physical connection. This connection is known as continuing bonds. In the end, 9/11 itself has been and continues to be a topic of great interest and generates much research from a variety of perspectives that range from terroristic threats at the onset to Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as a consequence. I have performed an extensive review of the

literature in the areas of sibling relations, grief and loss, adult sibling grief, continuing bonds and 9/11 to provide a foundation from which I was able to gain an understanding of what we know, what we do not and what associations I can reasonably make.

Assumptions of the Researcher

In consideration of the high profile nature of both 9/11 itself and the so-designated Families of 9/11, there are likely to be many assumptions drawn from the plethora of reporting, first person stories, memorials, legal questions and publicity that has developed over time. It is my assumption that the participants of the study will see themselves apart from any other cadre of grieving individuals. Furthermore, by virtue of the fact that the information flow about the deceased to next of kin invariably went to the spouse, to the parents and/or to the children first, Siblings of 9/11 may have felt disenfranchised by the “official” process. Lastly, in the recognition that only 289 bodies were found intact (September 11th Families Association, 2012; <http://nymag.com/news/articles/wtc/1year/numbers.htm>), it is assumed that ambiguous loss was and still is prevalent among the bereaved.

In further consideration of my aforementioned positionality, I believe that potential participants will recognize my positionality as reflective of a kindred spirit; one who has, to some extent, walked the same path; one who by virtue of that path will be more empathic, less judgmental and more aligned with the language data the participants will present. By the same token, my positionality presents a bias towards which I must be and remain reflexive throughout the process. In consideration of this positionality, I did not disclose my connection in an overt way until after each interview.

To those participants who asked about my positionality and there were several, I responded “yes,” and, then, requested to wait until after the interview process is complete to speak more candidly. Each respected that request.

Definition of Terms (for purposes of this study)

Ambiguous Loss – recognizing a loss has occurred while being unsure as to the nature and final disposition of that loss - basically not having hard evidence of the loss other than the loss itself.

Attachment – maintenance of physical and/or emotional proximity to a figure perceived to promote adaptive functioning, to provide a refuge from threat and to provide a safe place from which to engage in further development.

Bereaved – one who is suffering the death of a loved one.

Bereavement – emotional response to the loss of a loved one by death.

Continuing Bonds – a concept that emphasizes the need for the bereaved to seek new and sustain old bonds with the deceased in terms of memories, metaphors and interactions for healthy grief resolution and recognizes that severing such bonds is not conducive to that resolution.

Grief - deep and poignant distress caused by, or, as if, by bereavement; an intense emotional response to the loss of someone or something significant; from the Latin word meaning “burden,” implying a burden of sorrow.

Mourning - period of time during which signs of grief are shown.

Sibling Relations – the bond between siblings as objects of attachment characterized by shared memories and roles within a structured, interdependent system that fosters and shapes independent development and adjustment in early life that can continue into later life.

Trauma – an emotional or psychological injury or shock resulting from an extremely stressful situation.

Victim – any individual who lost his or her life as a result of the attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and as passengers on any of the four flights that crashed on September 11, 2001.

9/11 - September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States, specifically the World Trade Center in New York, the Pentagon in Washington, DC and the crash of Flight 93 in Pennsylvania, including the ensuing deaths of nearly 3,000 people.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The section will review the literature as it pertains to the areas of research interest presented in Chapter One. My research on Sibling Relations helped me to understand and bring to the table the uniqueness of siblings as they interact and develop over a lifetime through an understanding of the primacy of attachment. The Grief and Loss section is extensive in its attempt to bring into focus the way grief manifests, the factors that affect it including the modes of death and the stages and tasks that theorists have put forth to explain the human response and work towards meaningful resolution. These two foundational areas set the groundwork to discuss the unique nature of Adult Sibling Relations and the impact on grief reactions as the major postulate of this study. I further propose that continuing bonds as an effort to retain an emotional connection to the deceased in the form of a maintenance regimen is apropos to sibling grief especially where there is a high level of ambiguity as we have seen in deaths resulting from 9/11. To round out this chapter, I will illustrate how the topics of terrorism, post-traumatic stress disorder and Just World Beliefs are germane to the tragedy of 9/11, as well as to an appreciation of the grief responses of Siblings of 9/11.

Sibling Relations

From a biblical perspective, death first appears in Genesis in the context of sibling relations. While the story of Cain and Abel presents a rather dysfunctional relationship, interactions between siblings remains one of life's most enduring and influential associations (Halstead-Cleak & Morgan, 2010).

Longevity of the Sibling Relationship

Sibling relationships exist on a continuum. While one may enjoy the company of parents or spouses for 50 years or so, barring any extreme circumstances, one is likely to associate with a sibling for far longer and, perhaps in the final analysis, as an actual life partner enjoying a shared history uniquely fashioned in an intimate and secure family setting (Kluger, 2006; Nandwana & Katoch, 2009) or, perhaps, in a not so secure setting. Siblings might expect to be a part of one another's life for 80 to 100% of their total lifespan (Halstead-Cleak & Morgan, 2010). The ongoing interaction from a very young age presents innumerable possibilities for molding each other's belief systems. As we view development across the lifespan, in the early years, siblings provide emotional support, modeling, protection, comfort, social shaping, learning through play, and familial functions. DeVita (2007) regards the sibling relationship as a "dialogue" (p. 148) that starts from the moment siblings become aware of each other and continues on throughout life with innumerable interactions, positive, neutral and negative. When a sibling dies, the dialogue stops abruptly leaving the surviving sibling waiting for a response that will never occur.

Developmental Considerations of Siblings

Everyday access to each other and ongoing interaction provides opportunities to become more competent in cooperative and collaborative behaviors, as well as in resolving conflicts. Caring relationships between siblings will foster a greater level of empathic obligation and compromise in resolving conflicts, allowing a safe haven in which to voice objections and vent frustrations (Brody, 1998). Ongoing negative

emotional reactions can encourage chronic dissonant behaviors impacting psychosocial development. While sibling conflict appears to be a negative influence on behaviors, the result of such a condition may actually enhance problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills with others. Brody (1998) indicates that sibling interactions may augment skills that are carried on through the lifespan as individuals grow and mature. Nevertheless, sibling warmth and caring are protective attributes that provide concerned and compassionate protection during times of negative emotional upheaval that the other may experience throughout adulthood (Gass, Jenkins & Dunn, 2007; Moser, Jones, Zaorski & Mirsalimi, 2005). Kluger (2006) reports that while growing up, siblings spend up to 33% of their free time with each other. That's more than time spent with parents and friends and influences both similarities and differences, thereby prompting both emulation and individuation. At a point unique in the development of each sibling dyad, individuation occurs in the form of partitioning of identity into separate patterns of interaction and a new mastery of self (Moser et al., 2005).

Kramer and Conger (2009) make the point that individuals tend to observe their siblings from a very different perspective than they observe their parents and learn quite differently as a result. On a negative note, they explain how a social contagion model may put a younger sibling at risk as they follow their elder sibling's lead in smoking, substance abuse and other negative habits either by direct observation or by assimilating attitudes and social mores.

Adult Siblings Interactions

The relationship in the middle years is apt to be influenced by factors based on personal choices such as spouse, work, location, children, and interests, some of which may undermine the emotional, as well as physical proximity. There seems to be data that indicates choices are, in some ways, influenced by familial modeling provided by both parents and siblings. Such factors can be positive (warm and caring) or negative (abusive and maladaptive) and the strength of the sibling relationship tends to display the influence these factors impose (Moser et al., 2005). In later years, siblings may play a small part in the day to day operations in each other's adult lives. They may or may not be important or, at least, are not regularly present fixtures at this particular juncture, but could certainly remain a part of the social and familial landscape as influences in the early years continue to impact system and subsystem environments in later years (Brody, 1998). Congers et al. (2009) report that siblings are important mediators of critical events in their family life, as well as in life experience in general and tend to depend on each other's counsel and support in times of conflict and uncertainty, as well as collaboration on issues dealing with transitions in the family such as aging parents or the death of their parents. Nandwana and Katoch (2009) conclude that the associations of siblings span a continuum of emotional relationship on a normal curve with tails that extend from intimate to hostile and with characteristics indicating loyalty to apathy in the middle ground.

Interestingly, the outliers of intimacy and hostility appear strongest in females while the middle grounds of both loyalty and apathy are strongest amongst males. Yet,

the dynamics of the sibling relationship varies in relation to the complexity and intensity of the familial contract and the sibling dyad itself. With the advent of empty nest or the death of a spouse, siblings can have more time and a stronger inclination to re-establish the ties that originally bound them. Whereas competition can exist between siblings on many levels, there may be a lifelong inclination to continually measure and express who they are based on each other (Conger, Stocker & McGuire, 2009; Nandwana & Katoch, 2009).

Attachment as It Pertains to Siblings

Early recognition of a sibling as an attachment figure provides a significant opportunity for individuals to develop and understand the nature of other secure attachments later in life, as well as defend against insecure attachments that they will undoubtedly have to contend with as they progress through life. On the other hand, insecure attachments with siblings can raise the expectation that insecure attachments are a norm to be expected in future relationships thus impacting the worldview of the affected individual in a pejorative way (Moser et al., 2005).

From Bowlby's (1982) attachment theory perspective, a secure base indicates a platform from which to explore and experience the world. Bowlby (1982) sees attachment as an evolutionary process that ensures survival of humans over time. He defines it as a behavioral system which causes humans to react to stressful or threatening situations by seeking or sustaining proximity to a perceived attachment figure. In classical attachment theory, attachment figures are physically available, provide safety from threats and allow a sheltered environment from which to explore and learn.

Conceivably, attachment extends or, perhaps more accurately, stems from observations of the animal kingdom (Bowlby, 1982, p. 7) where the young typically return to the safety of the nest seeking their perceived attachment figure for assurance when threatened (Safe Haven); using that Safe Haven as a base from which they can explore the world, face the unknown and interact with their environment to develop survival skills (Secure Base); and seek the comparative safety of their parents' closeness (Proximity Maintenance) in times of uncertainty. Exploration of the world is dynamic when the attachment figure is deemed available. In its basic construct, proximity signifies availability.

Early attachment theory literature regarded attachment as a developmental process in infants relative to their mothers or other providers with a mutuality subsisting of a caregiver system that provides attachment needs from a reciprocal perspective. Later theorists expanded on Bowlby's theory to investigate how attachment manifests in other relationships particularly between adults (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Field, Gao & Paderna, 2006). Cicarelli (1989) states:

Sibling relationships are the total of the interactions (physical, verbal and nonverbal communication) of two or more individuals who share knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and feelings regarding each other, from the time that one sibling becomes aware of the other (p. 4).

Endurance as it applies here maintains that a sibling connection lasts 80 to 90% of their respective lifespans, beyond the timeframe associated with their own parents, their own marriages and their own children. Some relationships leave early, some relationships come later, but sibling relationships start early and stay late. The literature consistently makes this point citing that siblings are still bound to each other even when their parents'

marriage fails, perhaps even more so in such circumstances as one attachment figure is replaced by another (Packman, Horsley, Davies & Kramer, 2006; Pretorius, Halstead-Clark & Morgan, 2010).

In spite of all aspects of the uniqueness of the sibling relationship and the differences intrinsic to the personalities of the respective sibling, they are likely to be the only person to understand and know in the most familiar way what it was like to grow up in that particular family with those particular parents in that particular environment with the shared memories inherent in such an intimate context (Wray, 2003). Therefore, from one adult to another adult of significance, attachment theory may provide and explain the same functionality, perhaps, to a greater degree among siblings.

Grief and Loss

When using the keywords “grief” and “loss” in the research database, the return of articles and books dedicated to these topics is astounding indicating there is a firm foundation of research and interest in this area (Golsworthy & Coyle, 1999; Klass, 1995; Neimeyer, Prigerson & Davies, 2002; Smith, McCullough & Poll, 2003; Worden, Davies & McCown, 1999; Worden, 2001).

There is a definitive universality to the concepts of grief and loss. It is normal and expected that all human beings will encounter loss at some point, if not at many points in their lives and will grieve as a result of that loss. Neimeyer et al. (2002) state that grief is both a natural phenomenon and a human construction. They define grief as:

...representing a natural response to profound loss, one characterized by presumably universal symptoms, stages or struggles (p. 236).

Throughout history, humans have attempted to assimilate their dead into collective memories bonding them in some fashion to culture and tradition while seeking methods to understand and normalize the emotions of the bereaved.

The simplest explanation of loss suggests having something of value and, then, no longer having it. That simple explanation can be quite profound in the implication that loss manifests in many forms as well as on many levels of intensity depending on a variety of factors. To name a few, we can lose keys, money, jobs, respect, power, self-esteem, identity, safety, freedom, dreams and, in the most extreme, a loved one through death. To Bowlby (1982), death of a loved one represents a loss of an attachment object. Irrespective of whether it is termed love or attachment, that is when the heart breaks. The broken heart is often a cost of commitment, a cost of love, a cost of attachment. There are many factors that mitigate the feeling of grief, but it is the strength of attachment that mandates the reaction to that final disconnect. Historically, the pursuit of disengagement or severance from the attachment object was seen as a means of protecting one's self and moving through the grief process. Baker (2001) presents the bereaved as one who has suffered a disengagement from a significant attachment figure. Referring to Freud's (2005) seminal work, *Mourning and Melancholia*, the idea is that in order for mourning to reach a satisfactory and healthy completion, one must detach from the lost object. Detachment in this scenario refers to a loosening of emotional bonds allowing the bereaved, in Freud's words, to be "free and uninhibited (p. 245)."

This very concept of intentional detachment from the lost object is in question in more recent literature (Baker, 2001; Charles & Charles, 2006; Corr & Doka, 2001; Field,

Gao & Paderna, 2006; Neimeyer, Baldwin & Gillies, 2006; Packman, Horsley, Davies & Kramer, 2006; Stroebe & Schut, 1999) with new interpretations of the grief process and new understanding of the value of maintaining a connection to the deceased. That connection can be accommodated through continuing bonds to foster continuity, adaptation and an accommodation to a new worldview.

Manifestations of Grief

Grief manifests in all the human dimensions: physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral and spiritual (Worden, 2001). Some theorists suggest that certain reactions are indicative of stages or phases through which the bereaved will pass (Bowlby, 1982; Kubler-Ross, 1969, Rando, 2006) whether in a linear or non-linear fashion as they experience the process. Others allow for the more proactive notion of tasks (Worden, 2001) as the means through which the grief process is more efficiently and safely addressed. Tasks imply that the bereaved is not a passive participant in the process.

Physical grief response.

From a physical perspective, there can be a feeling of hollowness in the stomach, tightness in the chest, an oversensitivity to light and noise, depersonalization (nothing seems real), as well as a lack of energy or strength. While these physical sensation are not necessarily concurrent, they are associated with other dimensions most notably the emotional distress, sadness and depression. Physical sensations that are apparent in one's body are reactions to a severe stress event. Such reactions were described by Hans Selye, M.D. (1973) when he wrote "Stress is the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change" (p. 692). The death of a loved one is a demand for change on all of

the human dimensions. Selye's definition is explicit in citing that stress manifests in physical response. People are holistic creatures and stress imposed on one dimension overflows into and affects others.

Cognitive grief response.

Cognitively, the bereaved may experience disbelief and confusion. Kubler-Ross (1969) stated that denial is one of the stages of grief and can provide a buffer to the harsh reality of the loss. It should be a temporary, but essential defense to gain time and may be more disposed to those for whom denial is a pattern in life. There may be short-term memory loss as a result of confusion and a lack of concentration due to preoccupation with the loss. The loss itself is, at that point in time, a seminal event that predicates bereavement in an ongoing progression. Some bereaved may experience an awareness of a presence or hallucinations betokening the dead (Parkes, 1995; Worden, 2004). Parkes (1972) refers to "searching" (p.79) for one's lost love as a means of mitigating the reality of the loss, as well as the related pain. Searching, though not finding, is an attempt to establish a continuing connection to the deceased associated with the rich visual representation as an outgrowth of ongoing obsession with the deceased. Searching is also consistent with an attempt to reconnect with an attachment figure. The bereaved may experience the presence of the deceased by a glimpse of a familiar face in a crowd or on the street, the sound of a voice or laughter and, most often, by virtue of the olfactory sense, i.e. the fragrance of perfume or cologne; a whiff of the deceased clothing or hair; and, even, of a pipe or cigar.

Behavioral grief response.

Behaviors can indicate the extent of problematic reactions as the bereaved may exhibit disturbances of sleep and/or appetite, absent minded behaviors, or crying and restlessness. Withdrawing socially seems to be a regular and sometimes necessary occurrence. Here the bereaved do not feel comfortable in the company of others, partly because others may not feel comfortable with overt sorrow. There is usually a groundswell of support in the early days of the loss, i.e. people visiting, calling, sending cards and flowers, and bringing food, etc. that begins to drop off in the first couple of months. People expect the bereaved to return to the former state of normal functioning, to be the person they were before. Most often, that is not possible. When the support leaves off and the bereaved returns to the activities of their life, they recognize that it is not the same; something, someone is missing. The bereaved may feel the need to avoid of those people whose lives were not affected by the loss and whose relative “happiness” cannot be tolerated in the beginning of the bereavement process (Humphrey, 2009; Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2005; Worden, 2001).

Emotional grief response.

In consideration of what can be considered “normal” emotional responses, one may include feelings of numbness, shock, sadness, anxiety, loneliness, fatigue (emotional as opposed to or in conjunction with physical), helplessness and yearning. Yearning is often experienced by waiting for the phone call or visit that will never come and is an adjunct to denial. Parkes (1972) refers to this as pangs of grief and Bowlby (1982) calls it yearning and protest that stems from the unequivocal, yet unbelievable reality of the loss.

From an intellectual standpoint, most bereaved understand that there is no valid point in yearning and protesting, but, at times, cannot resist the compulsion. Anger is reported and, again, Kubler-Ross (1969) suggests this as the third stage. While it is not automatic, it may come in the form of rage, envy or resentment and can be displaced and projected to the deceased, to doctors and nurses, caretakers, God, ministers and priests, and, in the case of murder, the perpetrator. At some point, anger can be targeted at one's self. Anger at one's self is prompted by feelings that more could have been done to protect the deceased and/or prevent the death, as well as thoughts that there was a missed opportunity to say more, to forgive or ask forgiveness, or to say goodbye. In the case of an ambiguous relationship where there may have been conflict or of a caregiver who feels subjugated to the needs of the person before their death, there may be feelings of emancipation and relief to be quickly followed by guilt at having such thoughts (Worden, 2001). Intense and profound sadness is a common emotional expression after a loss and it is important to note that sadness exists on a continuum with depression, Kubler-Ross's (1969) fourth stage.

Spiritual grief response.

As we recognize the response of a person to any stimuli, particularly the death of a loved one, we would be remiss not to acknowledge the spiritual component that is impacted by the event and, in turn, bears on the grief process. Spirituality and religion have often been confused with each other and used interchangeably. Each is a specific construct with differences implicit in that specificity. Much of the literature uses the term religious or religion to denote the formalized, ritualized and structured organization of

thoughts and behaviors around the notion of worship of and relationship with a perceived higher power. The term spirituality often indicates a transcendent (belief in a power greater than and outside of ourselves) or immanent (existing in the mind) extra-physical dimension that seeks to define and understand the meaning and purpose of life (Decker, 2006; Miller, Korinek & Iver, 2006; Prest, Russel & D'Souza, 1999; Russel & Yarhouse, 2006). For purposes of discussion, the terms religion and spirituality will be melded to represent a distinct component of the multifaceted face of diversity which we will call spirituality.

Conventional wisdom indicates that some bereaved may seek solace in God or a perceived higher power, prayer, religion or the spiritual aspects of connection to the deceased. While there are bereaved individuals for whom a connection to a higher power is not present, even they may find that common expressions of sympathy often include such less than empathic statements as "he is in a better place" or "it was God's Will." These platitudes are telling in that, in terms of the death of a loved one, sympathetic attitudes quite naturally, automatically and confidently lean toward a religious bearing in the expectation that the reference will be welcomed and will ease the burden on the bereaved. That may not always be the case. In fact, as stated in the discussion of behavioral manifestations of grief, the bereaved may exhibit anger at their perceived higher power who they expect would control certain outcomes ("How could He allow this?"). That perceived power often fulfills a function of attachment and who, by virtue of the bereaved's negative reaction, may represent an additional loss. The safe haven of a higher power's grace to which certain individuals may turn in times of stress and the

secure base from which those individuals can explore the unknown under a deity's protection are now forfeit. Proximity in the form of omnipresence offers little value when protection of the deceased was not provided (Field et al., 2006).

It is apparent that many people will pause and reflect before giving an account of how they perceive and define spirituality and even then be unable to definitively characterize their own spirituality. It is much easier to simply lump religion and spirituality together because religion bespeaks of God and spirituality seems to bespeak of Godly things.

Spiritual Reaction to 9/11

In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks not only did a spiritual component indicate less stress reaction and greater hopefulness, but a shift to a spiritual outreach as compared to levels prior to 9/11 was much greater (Park & Ai, 2006). Shaw, Joseph and Linley (2005) reported a national survey where it was reported that in the days following 9/11, 90% of general public surveyed stated that they turned to their religious faith after the attacks. There was a great outpouring of prayer in an attempt to help make meaning not only of what happened, but of the very fact that it was able to happen at all. Many assumptions about invulnerability and safety within our borders were shattered and a spiritual connection may have provided a framework by which people were able to reassess and reconstitute a sense of control in their lives. Research of this nature specifically targeting those who lost a loved one in the attacks is not in evidence, but it can be inferred that a loss so sudden, of such great magnitude, and of such a public nature elicited responses on many levels that this study may show.

Factors Affecting the Grief Process

Grief is a challenge to the human spirit and ordinarily not thought of as an illness. Illnesses generally come from wounding events such as disease, infections and physical trauma. Yet, loss can be thought of as a “blow” or a “wound,” both of which can be a trauma of the psychological kind (Parkes, 1986) and is often treated by professionals. Nevertheless, as part of the progress towards a healthy resolution through the grief process, bereavement is a time of transition shaped by such factors as attachment, mode of death, support systems, coping styles and other stressors (Worden, Davies & McCowen, 1999; Parkes, 1986).

Attachment in the grief process.

The nature of the attachment is dependent on such variables as strength, security, ambivalence, conflicts and dependency. According to Bowlby (1982), attachment is a lasting emotional bond to an attachment figure. His early work examined the bonds children developed with their mothers in London during World War II and in its aftermath. The child is looking for dependability and security in the mother figure. Based on these findings, four key components of attachment were developed. The first factor is providing a Safe Haven in the event of threat or fear, the second is having a Secure Base from which one can take first tentative steps to explore the world, and the third is Proximity Maintenance ensuring the attachment figure is near providing a feeling of safety. There is a fourth factor that becomes prominent in the grief process and that is Separation Distress. It indicates a disturbance when one is separated from the attachment figure. Ainsworth (1967) engaged in research of attachment with Bowlby, but working

further with children in other contexts, she conducted naturalistic observations of mother-infant attachment in Uganda, publishing her first work, *Infancy in Uganda* (1967). In it, she described three styles of attachment. They are secure attachment, ambivalent-insecure attachment and avoidant-insecure attachment (Bretherton & Main, 2000). The attachment styles were extrapolated to indicate that they continue to impact relationships between individuals and their attachment figure into adulthood and who, in many cases, are each other (Bretherton, 1992), representing a reciprocal arrangement, for example, siblings. Secure styles indicate that a temporary separation, while stressful, will not cause undue anxiety because of confidence that the attachment figure will return. The ambivalent-insecure style is more problematic in the lack of confidence that the attachment figure will return. Lastly, with the avoidant-insecure style, the individual does not become agitated at separation because of total lack of dependency on the attachment figure. Her work indicated that while attachment to certain figures may not necessarily extend to adulthood, the stronger a secure style is in infancy, the more likely for the adult to have a great sense of self-worth and feelings of security with a perceived attachment figure. This concept fits well into the developmental relationship between siblings. While Bowlby's and Ainsworth's work is significant and groundbreaking, it remains unclear how these styles will impact an individual faced with the death of the attachment figure in later life (Humphrey, 2009) though certain assumptions can be made. What does seem to be evident is that the stronger the sense of security, the greater the distress at separation, and, conversely, the greater the sense of ambivalence, the less effect a death of the attachment figure will have. As this study will investigate the reactions of individuals who lost

siblings, it is assumed and expected that those who agree to participate enjoyed a strong and secure attachment which when severed in such an abrupt and incomprehensible manner as occurred on 9/11 will have had severe distress and ongoing repercussions (Humphrey, 2009).

Modes of death.

The mode of death includes such variables as ambivalence, suddenness, violence and proximity (Humphrey, 2009; James & Friedman, 1998; Worden, 2004). Each of these elements is likely to have had an intense impact on the surviving sibling. Ambivalence is particularly problematic. Boss (1992) defines ambiguous loss as the inability to know for certain if a loved one is present or not. Considering that 2,819 people perished on 9/11, only 289 intact bodies were found, 19,858 body parts were found and 1,717 families received no remains (September 11th Families Association, 2012), it seems probable that nearly 2,000 families of 9/11 suffered from ambiguous loss. Furthermore, grief may be assuaged somewhat by engaging in the normal rituals of death that include a place of visitation, usually a grave. For many of the families of 9/11, there may have been memorial services, but without a casket and without a final resting place in the traditional sense.

Suddenness is also a salient piece of the grief puzzle especially in the case of 9/11 sibling survivors. That day, people left their homes, said goodbye to loved ones and went about their lives. In some cases, they called a significant person in their life when the danger was evident. We can only wonder how many called their siblings. Irrespective of who was called, people existed in one moment and no longer existed in the next.

On 9/11, violence, it seems, was the intentional point and without it, the ambivalent loss and the suddenness would be moot. Violence adds another sinister aspect by fragmenting the survivors' view of a just world. In the case of 9/11, terrorists were blamed, but they died with the victims. Osama bin Laden became a somewhat illusory figure whose death might even a score for some and one wonders whether it was a decisive or pyrrhic victory. During a time of national tragedy when violence seems present and people were feeling generally anxious, even civil liberties seemed conceptual. By virtue of the Patriot Act, the American people appeared ready to give up essential liberties for a sense of safety that might preclude future events of the scope of 9/11. Yet, the question always remained: could it have been prevented?

In the case of 9/11, proximity was and is a component of grief after the fact. The act perpetrated on 9/11 happened on national soil, not in an obscure foreign location. There are three distinct sites where the siblings perished and, for many family members, these sites are also considered the final resting place. They are now sacred places, hallowed ground where memorials serve up cyclical commemorations in tribute to the fallen. Just as healing is not passive, but, rather, an active enterprise, so are memorials active externalizations of emotions (Castle & Phillips, 2003).

Loss through murder and violence.

Separation and loss are intrinsic parts of the normal development of humans and the death of a sibling in childhood may cause particular problems in the development of a child. Yet, there seems to be little empirical evidence as to the prevalence of developmental risk imposed on adult individuals due to the loss of a sibling (Charles &

Charles, 2006). Pretorius, Halstead-Clark and Morgan (2010) relate that bereavement through the loss of a sibling is dissimilar to all other forms of bereavement, but a loss through violent means such as that of the Siblings of 9/11 produces unanticipated responses on several levels. The Siblings of 9/11 are individuals who have, in fact, lost a sibling to murder. Homicide survivor grief is a unique form of loss and, ostensibly, more painful than other types. Because of this, Siblings of 9/11 are likely to suffer greater levels of identity confusion in the aftermath of the death of their brothers or sisters (Pretorius et al., 2010). Using the phenomenological analysis of Giorgi (2008), Pretorius et al. (2010) examined the lived experience of individuals who lost a sibling to murder discerning seven distinct themes in their data analysis.

1. Shock and Disbelief: As expected, the initial reaction to learning of their sibling's murder was one of shock. We have discussed suddenness as a mediating factor in grief, but in these cases, murder overshadowed all other mediators affecting participants' ability to grasp the reality of the death.
2. Recollection, Guilt and Self-blame: The participants had taken the lives and existence of their sibling as a matter of course and expressed guilt at their inability to foresee that this might happen. The participants articulated concern that they had, at times, thought about what life would be like without their respective siblings and saw this as a "premonition (p. 5)," the irrational thought that they could have somehow protected their sibling from death persisted.
3. Rupture and Fragmentation: As discussed earlier, relative to the segment on disruption of the standards of normalcy within the family, Pretorius et al. (2010) found that participants were unprepared for the collateral damage to the family system and the

communication style that formerly allowed for free expression that now elicited conflicted reactions among family members.

4. **Support:** Siblings found that they were torn between processing their own grief and being supportive caretakers for parents, spouses and children of their siblings. As a result, their expected support system and attachment figures were not available to them effectively manifesting as multiple losses. While some level of support was issued by friends and others from without the family circle, participants were more likely to be remote and introverted.
5. **Justice and Revenge:** one of the reactive factors in grief can be anger, but in the case of murder where there are targeted perpetrators, anger becomes a motivator for vengeance and the reconstruction of a just-world concept through the pursuit of fairness and righteousness.
6. **Reformulation:** Cultural, traditional and religious groundings were weakened. Finding meaning became a challenging undertaking. Previous standards of meaning-making were forfeit and participants questioned former belief systems and perspectives on death and where their sibling now resides.
7. **Resilience, Healing and Growth;** participants recognized the need to find ways to regain the control that had been previously ceded to their sibling, in terms of protection or as a way to take small steps of accomplishment to rebuild from the chaos that now occupied their lives.

Sibling loss through violence like the loss experienced by the Siblings of 9/11 is a multifaceted, protracted and exacerbated series of existential crises predicating traumatic bereavement. Because of the ragged hole that such losses leave in the psyche of the bereaved, the full effect of terroristic acts becomes difficult to comprehend, if, in fact,

they are comprehensible at all. The point of terroristic act is, in contemplation, psychological in nature and, therefore, is aimed at a far larger target audience than those who suffered immediate loss (Miller, 2002).

Resilience vs. recovery.

Some bereaved have been able to show a stable attitude and exhibit more transient reverberations in their response to sibling loss. Bonanno (2004) states that resilience is quite different from recovery. Recovery implies a departure from and an effort to reclaim what is often termed normal functioning. That departure is based on a stimulus or stressor that exceeds the threshold of stability for an individual. Resilience, on the other hand, denotes the ability to maintain a level of poise and composure in the face of the same stressor. Grief work as the traditional conception of a recovery function may not be appropriate or necessary to all bereaved. Bonanno, Galea, Bucciarelli and Vlahov (2006) assert that there is still some skepticism in the research record as to the ability of adults to display resilience in the most extreme and severe of stressors. Their 2006 study indicates that there was extensive resilience in the population of New York City in the first six months after the attacks on the World Trade Center. Of those participants who had lost a friend or a relative in the attacks, Bonanno et al. (2006) claim that 53.9% displayed resilient features. This statistic does not indicate the closeness of the loss or the relative attachment to the deceased. The study at hand attempts to understand the lived in experience of Siblings of 9/11 and how the concept of continuing bonds with the deceased may impact and, perhaps, create a level of equilibrium.

Stages and Tasks of Grief Work

When there is the death of a loved one, conventional wisdom indicates that the bereaved will act out in variety of ways in response to the extreme emotional stress incurred by the death. There have been many different theorists whose work attempts to describe and, in some ways, formulate the progression of emotional responses to such a stimuli.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross' Stages of Grief

One of the earliest characterizations of advancement through the grief process was presented by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross (1969) in her seminal work, *On Death and Dying*. Kubler-Ross (1969) first delineated her stages based on her experience with terminally ill patients. In 2005, one year after her death, *On Grief and Grieving: Finding Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss* was published, co-authored with David Kessler, where the thrust of the five stages of death was recalibrated as the five stages of loss. The stages that were originally based on her observations of dying patients are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance and are often erroneously construed as a linear progression (Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2005).

Denial is a protective act and attempts to simply get the bereaved through the first days of loss when nothing seems real and all points of reference are forfeit. It is not so much that the bereaved actually believes that the death did not occur, but is, rather, that the bereaved is in an overwhelmed state and can accept reality in small doses. Denial allows for this.

Anger, as mentioned before, can be projected in many directions and at a variety of people and processes. It stems from the conclusive understanding that life is unfair, but, at the same time, makes it painfully apparent that the bereaved did, in fact, love someone dearly. Anger is typically one of the first emotions realized and during a time of numbness, validates that the bereaved is still able to feel strong emotions.

Bargaining stalls for time and allows the bereaved to feel that there is still some arrangement that can be made to mitigate the pain and restore a sense of normalcy, one that is an alternate universe to the one we live in and to the present. As the bereaved moves through and out of the bargaining stage, guilt may emerge in the form of “if only” thinking.

Depression brings the bereaved back to the present universe and current time where the loss did happen. Depression is nature’s way of sealing the bereaved off and leaving little opportunity for other worries of the world to intrude. It is characterized as a dark place that the bereaved can, at once, despise and seek the safety of. It comes uninvited and slows down the cognitive assessment of what happened. It is the emotion that most makes others uncomfortable with the bereaved.

Acceptance is not being okay with or condoning what has happened. It is not forgetting or letting go. It is the part of the process that allows for a reinvestment in the life that still exists, one’s own. At the beginning of the grief process, there can be bad days and very bad days. Later in the process, there are bad days and not so bad days. By the time the bereaved reaches a point of acceptance, there are bad days and good days.

Acceptance means the bereaved has reevaluated life, readjusted to the new normal and is ready to acknowledge that life can still have meaning.

Of all the stage models presented herein, Kubler-Ross's model is the most well-known to the public at large. I expect that the participants in my research study will be acquainted with this model if not by name and will have recognized their descent into each of its stages.

Theresa Rando's Six R's

Theresa Rando (2006) created a stage model known as "Rando's Six R's."

Recognizing the Loss is the first stage echoing the notion of acceptance and understanding that the loss has, indeed, occurred. *React to the Loss* suggests that one should acknowledge and own the emotional pain associated with it. *Recollect and Re-Experience* proposes that the bereaved review life as it was with the deceased through revisiting memories and other associations. This "R" seems to suggest the notion of continuing bonds, but only in the early stages and as part of the preparation to ultimately surrendering the remembered connection. *Relinquish* implies that there is something to be given up resounding the Freudian notion that separation from the attachment or grief object is a necessary part of resolution. The focus is to help the bereaved understand that the world has changed in a material and indisputable way. *Readjust* denotes a correction of sorts where the bereaved starts to return to a previous level of functioning. Lastly, *Reinvest* means re-entering one's life with an amended worldview prepared and strong enough to move on.

John Bowlby

Bowlby (1982) stated that the bereaved are unable to accept or even recognize the intransience of the loss and the ensuing separation from the attachment figure. He reasons that the evolution of the part of the human brain that processes separation predates the ability to recognize that death is final. The deceased, then, is only temporarily absent. In Bowlby's second volume on *Attachment and Loss, Separation: Anxiety and Anger* (1973), he puts forth a stage process relative to loss of the attachment figure as it pertains to grief and loss. At first, humans *Protest* the death in an effort to reverse the separation and re-connect to the deceased. From the perspective of the attachment theory, that reconnection is sought in the form of physical proximity for safety and security. Such efforts cannot come to fruition and the bereaved enters Bowlby's (1973) second phase of *Despair* where there is a realization of the hopelessness of regaining any sort of physical proximity. *Detachment* follows as a defensive means against the finality of the loss. Bowlby's (1973) idea of physical proximity stems from his work with infants and their attachment to their mothers or other attachment figures. Attachment, as seen in adults, is less about being physically present and nearby, and more about knowing that the attachment figure is available to offer a positive response. Field, Gao and Paderna (2005) refer to this as "psychological proximity (p. 278)." Psychological or emotional proximity sources from the appreciation of the finality of death. Thus, the bereaved may use avoidance tactics to mitigate the pain of separation that is now accepted to be irreversible or in not accepting the finality, the bereaved may experience ephemeral encounters such as seeing the face or hearing the voice of the deceased in a crowd in a continuing attempt

to re-establish physical proximity, an indication to Bowlby (1980) that the grief process is stalled.

Progression Through Stages

The word “stages,” by its definition as a step or a period in a progress, activity or development (Webster, 1975) indicates an orderly progression from one part of a process to the next upon completion of the former. Kubler-Ross’s (1969) stages while giving this impression do not offer such a progression. Bowlby (1973, 1980), Kubler-Ross (1969), Parkes (1972) and Rando (2006) present the grief process and adaptation to the changes imposed by it in terms of moving on. Moving on may be interpreted to imply leaving something behind and suggests that the bereaved must move beyond the loss through severing ties with the deceased in order to complete a healthy transition to a new life in a world without the deceased. The inability to sever ties indicates that the bereaved are stuck in the tedious, recurring recreation of having just experienced a loss. Field, Gao and Paderna (2006) state that such models oversimplify what can be considered normative movement through a distinct though universal process by providing a format through which we can understand the general tendencies of the bereaved.

William Worden’s Four Tasks

Worden (2001) presents an alternative view of the grief process by markedly designating the movement through the process as four tasks. The word “tasks” clearly implies that there is active work to be done and eschew the notion that there are stages through which one proceeds in a passive way. However, despite affirming a linear

progression where completing previous tasks provides a blueprint for healing map,

Worden's tasks still echo many of the points put forward by other theorists.

Worden's (2001) first task is *Acceptance of the Reality of the Loss* acknowledging that it is an uncertain process in which one can proceed two steps and retreat one. Rituals are mitigating factors and denial, in the beginning as in Kubler-Ross's (1969) first stage, is seen as a self-protective feature.

The second task of *Working Through the Pain of Grief* is where the real work begins. Society is often uncomfortable with emotions and people are less likely to allow the bereaved to speak of their loss because it is sad. In this task, it is time for the bereaved to be with people with whom they can grieve safely and securely. Stalling at this juncture and not working through the pain will delay the process and can lead to depression. It is like crossing a river without a bridge or a boat. One must get into the water; feel its coldness, be buffeted by its currents and come out the other side having been immersed in the difficulty of the task.

Upon completion of the second task, the third task can be safely negotiated. It calls for *Adjustment to the New Environment*, the one where the deceased no longer exists; the one that is patently unfamiliar. Pain continues to persist as the bereaved strives to assess the nature of the relationship, the roles that were played and the relative levels of strength, attachment, security, ambivalence, and dependency that existed. It is in this task that Worden claims a connection to the deceased remains in place but, nevertheless, does not preclude life going on. It becomes a matter of psychologically relocating, maintaining a connection with and utilizing continuing bonds with the deceased. It is not

about forgetting or giving up a former relationship, but celebrating the fact that the bereaved is who he or she is because of the relationship. As Albom states, “Death ends a life, not a relationship” (p. 174).

In the fourth and last task, Worden (2001) like Rando (2006) refers to *Reinvestment in Life*. This is the time to remember that the bereaved is still alive and can still find meaning in life. It is a time to recognize what has been lost, but also what has not been lost. It is a point of moving through the process while maintaining a connection with the deceased and not moving on by leaving the deceased behind.

Stroebe and Schut’s Dual Process Model

Stroebe and Schut (1999) introduced their Dual Process Model (DPM) of grief work continuing the tradition that managing the process is a cognitive exercise that not only confronts the reality of the loss in an active and ongoing endeavor to come to terms with it and to raise one’s level of awareness, but to recognize that avoidance can and will lead to pathological consequences. Beyond the customary grief work phases and tasks, there is an appreciation for the assortment and diversity of stressors that are imposed. These stressors, both internal and external, demand attention by way of an adjustment process as exemplified by other theorists in terms of returning to a previous level of functioning. To say it that way, though, is to oversimplify the process and underestimate the weight of the impositions. Stroebe and Schut’s (1999) basic DPM recognizes that the death of a significant attachment figure in one’s life as the focus of the loss, represents transitions and adjustment that exceed the fundamentals of an intrapersonal model. They do not propose a phasal representation or sequential stages. Though not explicit in the

models of other theorists, there is the implication that movement through the various elements of the grief process can be slippery in that progress can be both forward and backward at various points as different and relevant stressors come into focus. Stroebe and Schut (1999) reframe grief work as a process on two levels. The first is loss-oriented where the bereaved attends to the actual loss as manifested in traditional intrapersonal grief work while the second is restoration-oriented where the bereaved adjusts to the substantial, yet often unanticipated secondary losses associated with the mundane tasks of living one's life. Such tasks include grasping the responsibilities and roles that had been previously assumed by the deceased (balancing the check book; winterizing the house; making meals, shopping, maintaining the car, etc.) to reinventing one's own identity to find meaning in the world that continues to exist, but with an important figure missing. Stroebe and Schut (1999) address Worden's (2001) tasks by adding certain qualifications to each task. Acceptance of the reality of the loss also means acceptance of the changed world and the implications of that change. To experience the pain of grief, there is a recognized need to find respite and ability to relieve one's self of the intense pain on occasion without guilt. While Worden (2001) seems to imply that pain is ever present, Stroebe and Schut (1999) believe that this does not mean the bereaved must wallow in the pain, but, instead, can and must find ways to divert one's self from its onslaught. To adjustment to the environment without the deceased, they add the notion of adjusting to new views of one's own self, as well as to a new worldview. Lastly, to psychological relocation of the deceased, they add the development of new roles, new relationships and,

most importantly, a new identity to be able to face the new world on one's own terms and within the structure of one's redefined belief system.

From the perspective of logistically handling the diverse tasks, Stroebe and Schut (1999) recommend what they call "oscillation" (p. 215) referring to the importance of attending to both the loss-oriented and the restoration-oriented processes in everyday life experience. There will be times to attend to the loss and there may be times when other tasks take center stage and must be addressed. Accepting that these are normal and valuable tasks, as well as recognizing the value of "oscillating" responsibilities is, in their research, crucial for optimal adjustment and a positive outcome for both physical and mental health.

Adult Sibling Grief

The literature has demonstrated the intense and singular connection siblings retain throughout their lifespans and has framed the grief responses, as well as the models of grief reactions and recovery. I now fuse those concepts to specify the unique characteristics of adult sibling grief.

When a spouse dies, we name the surviving spouse a widow or widower; when parents die, we name their children orphans. These are events that can be expected at some point in life. These are events that seem to fit into presupposed standards of normalcy. But when children or siblings die, we do not have a name for those who grieve, for those who are left to carry on in life. These are not events that are expected at any point in life. These are not events that fit into our presupposed standards of normalcy.

Sibling grief reactions incorporate all the responses associated with the loss of a loved one plus the added complications of disruption of those standards of normalcy within the family and the milieu of personal meaning that is all but incoherent in the rush of emotional response (Neimeyer et al., 2006). The familial communication styles and degree of consistency of interaction impact support systems many individuals have come to take for granted. Where there is open communication, there is a sharing of feelings and expectations, as well as respect for personal perspectives on the loss. Additionally, resources can be used within the family context in creative ways to maximize positive effect on the family unit while continuing to maintain attention to the particular needs of each member as they struggle with the death (Worden, Davies & McCown, 1999). When there is a significant loss within the family context, in this case, one of the children, the roles the deceased played in the family composition is a complicating factor. That sibling was also a son or daughter and the loss disturbs the meaning system by which the family has established a normal order of experiences and expectations over the lifespan. These expectations extend to both the family and the deceased and now call for a reconsideration and alteration of that system (DeVita, 2007; Neimeyer, Baldwin & Gillies, 2006). That may not always be possible in a way that can be mutually beneficial to all members in large part because of different understandings of the perceived reciprocities inherent in the relationship. From the parents' perspective, it is their child and their expectancy of the life course of that child is at odds with the reality of permanent severance. At a time when the surviving children are in greatest need of support and solace, the parents may not be able to offer those virtues further obviating the

prospect of a safe haven, a secure base, and maintained proximity. The children, in turn, may be prompted to protect and rescue their parents during this devastating time for the family, thereby forestalling and postponing their own ability to grieve in a healthy manner (Packman et al., 2006; Wray, 2003). Other individuals either internal or external to the family constellation may offer condolences to the parents to a greater degree than to the siblings or suggest to the sibling that they be strong for the benefit of their parents, thereby effectively disenfranchising the siblings' grief as secondary and peripheral. Wray (2003) suggests such sympathies are "dismissive condolences (p. 4)" that, while well meaning, often cause grieving siblings to feel as though their grief has been marginalized and is subjugated to others in the family, notably parents, spouse and children of the deceased. The bereaved tends to buy into this socially imposed obligation to attend to those whose grief is considered greater. To ignore this perceived obligation and do otherwise might be considered selfish and, ultimately, inflict guilt as a complicating factor to bereavement. Yet, at the same time, the bereaved sibling feels like an adjunct to the process that has deprived them of the very relationship that would have been the most supportive to them in all other circumstances.

Continuing Bonds

Continuing bonds (CB) refers to a concept that emphasizes the need for the bereaved to seek new and sustain old bonds with the deceased in terms of memories, metaphors and interactions for healthy grief resolution and recognizes that severing bonds is not necessarily conducive to that resolution (Field, Gao & Paderna, 2006; Neimeyer, 2000; Neimeyer, Baldwin & Gillies, 2006; Neimeyer, Prigerson & Davies,

2002; Packman, Horsley, Davies & Kramer, 2006). However, recent literature has both enforced this notion and questioned it. Field et al. (2006) state that CB is essential in adjusting to bereavement over the long term, yet not necessarily a successful strategy in all cases and situations. This can be said for a great many interventions and techniques and recognizes the uniqueness of each relationship as it is impacted by death. Packman, Horsley, Davies and Kramer (2006) explored the concept of CB in mitigating grief, but acknowledged the CB had previously been discussed only within certain contexts, notably children's grief over the loss of a parent and adult grief over the loss of a spouse. Nevertheless, the debate continues to center around the retention of bonds to the deceased and whether those bonds are disadvantageous or progressive in grief work and the necessary adjustment to the changed environment and worldview (Stroebe, Schut & Stroebe, 2005).

When one experiences the loss of someone of importance in their life or witnesses the experience of someone having to go through a similar occurrence, they, more often than not, participate in a ritual usually being that of a wake and/or funeral rite. Archeological discoveries indicate that such rituals have been performed by humans for over 100,000 years (Hayden, 1987). This experience, while on the surface appears to cause additional distress, in fact, signals the beginning of mourning, adds structure during a time of chaos and provides social support to the bereaved. Rituals tend to be important facilitative factors ensuring the continuance of communal and cultural bonds, as well as linking the definitive reality of death to the symbolism of an ongoing and unbroken bond (Castle & Phillips, 2003). In American society, grief rituals tend to be shorter and less

obvious than in other and older cultures. There is a limited amount of research on post-funeral rituals and most information is in the form of narrative and is anecdotal from grief therapist using such rituals for successful outcome in counseling (Castle & Phillips, 2003). Many European cultures, particularly widows and mothers who lost children wore “funereal clothing” from the date of the death to their own deaths. Rando (1985) defines post-funeral rituals as:

A specific behavior of activity which gives symbolic expression to certain feelings and thoughts of the actor(s) individually or as a group (p. 236).

Whether such rituals are ongoing or occur at one point in time, rituals mark not only the end of an individual’s life, but, more importantly, acknowledge that the individual existed at all.

In American society, the funeral rite, however, lasts a relatively short period of time in most cases a mere matter of days. It is the ensuing period that the most distress is realized for the bereaved as social support diminishes and people expect the bereaved to resume what they consider normal functions and to be their former selves. Most bereaved experience the worst of their grief during the next three months to two years (Horacek, 1995). It is during this time that symbolic continuance may begin to provide an opportunity to bridge the gap as an existential condition and the state of non-being, as it were, of the deceased by using photographs, musical and artistic expression, poetic representations, planting a tree, lighting a candle, creating a memorial fund or scholarship, wearing a bracelet with the deceased’s name or, even, getting a tattoo.

In their research, Packman et al. (2006) concede that the grief process, in general, is a pursuit of meaning in re-establishing what was understood or in synthesizing new meaning in the face of an altered world, one in which their sibling is no longer present. Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn (2004) uses the term “carrying” (p. 130) to epitomize the efforts siblings make to bring some characteristic or understanding of the deceased forward into the present and, then, the future. The bereaved realize that though their sibling is gone and will never return, there is still a part of that lost sibling present in their own identity. With their sibling’s death a piece of them died also, but, conversely, a piece of the sibling is still alive in them. These forms of ritualistic remembrance may arise from a fear of neglect and disloyalty through forgetting or feelings of confusion and disorientation that prompts humans to reformulate former points of reference that seem utterly lost. Perhaps, it is based on the social construct of a natural order where siblings parallel each other through life, thus reinforcing a bond that does not depreciate with death. In any case, it is the realization and acceptance of the idea that re-establishing physical proximity is not possible, yet the idea of permanent separation is untenable. Therefore, internalizing and preserving personally meaningful aspects of the deceased sibling allows for that symbolic connection that provides an emotional proximity consistent with Bowlby’s (1980) reorganization phase and Worden’s (2004) task of psychologically relocating the deceased. This part of the process embraces a restructuring of the prime goal of physical proximity to a new goal that is compliant with and relevant to the newly accepted status of the world. The relationship continues as it morphs from

the proximal as one that is at hand to the distal as one that embraces remembrance. In doing so, it allows for functional access to the deceased.

CB is influenced to a large degree by the nature of the relationship prior to death. Where there was a caring and supportive relationship, CB is likely to be poignant while struggling through the acceptance of missing a part of the self. Where there was a conflicted and fragmented relationship with hostile interactions and a lack of trust, CB may conjure alarming imageries and reminiscences.

Adult siblings process their grief dependent on individual and environmental characteristics similarly to anyone else. The time in the sibling's life, the time in the deceased's life, the circumstances surrounding the death, the relationship prior to and at the time of the death, coping styles and resilience, individuation, and prior losses are all factors that impact the way siblings will process their loss. These coupled with mode of death and proximity, as well as the overall functioning and environmental aspects of the family dynamics will play a large part in the facilitation of the grief process, the interactions between family members and, ultimately, the utilization of CB in the adaptive process of bereavement (Packman et al., 2006).

9/11

Terrorism.

Terrorism is defined as the systematic use of horror, shock and panic to inspire intense fear and anxiety in order to intimidate populations or governments into granting demands through coercion (Webster, 1975). It is a derivation of the Latin word "terrere." Literally, it means to frighten. According to Miller (2002):

Terrorism is the 'perfect' traumatic stressor because it combines the elements of malevolent intent, actual or threatened extreme harm and unending fear of the future (p. 284).

As a means to destabilize and intimidate, it is not new and has roots in the discovery that whole populations can be coerced by delivering a destructive act on a few by a few. The attacks of 9/11 were consistent with that premise with the added component of maximizing the number of deaths and the expanse of destructive power. The official number of those who died at the three sites attacked that day stands at 2,973 (Ben-Veniste, R., Fielding, F.F., Gorelick, J.S., Gorton, S., Hamilton, L.H., Kean, T.H., Kerrey, B. & Lehman, J.F., 2004). While we can mourn those we lost, the cost to families, survivors, witnesses and the American population as a whole is enormous. The roller coaster ride of emotions in those early days after 9/11 was exacerbated by the real time, constant barrage of images, stories, news reports and commentaries that streamed into every living room in the country and throughout the world, for that matter. The dichotomy of trying to understand that we were under attack by a single extremist group with a single, unified plan verses the recognition that three separate and distinct areas of the country were subjected to those attacks left America reeling in an effort to assimilate the veracity of what happened. The television coverage presented a linear perspective of time-stamped occurrences that may or may not have been intended to happen in a particular order, but did as circumstance allowed and as the viewing public accepted as standard narrative expression (Muntean, 2009). The startling and disconcerting difference was that there was no ending, no conclusion, no meaning to be drawn from the repetitive

images other than fear and confusion. Meaningfulness did not have a place for expression in the onslaught of the constant scenes of horrific images of buildings exploding and collapsing, people jumping from windows, people running in the street, crushed and burned emergency vehicles, the moonscape of ash and debris and the unceasing rehashing of the spectacle. We were, nevertheless, mesmerized, perhaps, because we had never witnessed such destruction on our soil before or, perhaps, because we vainly sought to glean some level of understanding and assimilation through repetition. Nevertheless, we were damaged, some more than others. The toll to physical and mental health continues to plague the nation.

Post-traumatic stress disorder.

We can estimate that we were all traumatized to various degrees in the initial weeks. The recurring representations over succeeding months may have served to move the experience into the realm of post-traumatic stress disorder for the nation as a whole, but, mostly significantly and decisively, for those who lost a loved one and I maintain, acutely, for those who lost a sibling. According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual IV - Text Revised (2000), for PTSD (DSM 309.81) to be considered, the following must be present for Condition A:

1. The person experienced, witnessed, or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity or self or other.
2. The person's response involved fear, helplessness, or horror.

adding that for Condition B:

The traumatic event is consistently re-experienced in one (or more) of”
five other criteria. From that list, we can safely assume that there were:

1. Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions.
2. & 3. Omitted
4. Intense psychological distress at the exposure to internal or external cues that symbolize or resemble as aspect of the traumatic event.
5. Physiological reactivity on exposure to internal or external cues which that symbolize or resemble as aspect of the traumatic event.

For Condition C, three criteria are required such as:

1. “Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma” in an effort to return to some idea of normalcy.
2. “Efforts to avoid activities, places or people that arouse recollections of the trauma” and, thankfully, after the first few months, images of the falling buildings were no longer broadcast.
3. The inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma avoiding the horrific details.
4. Omitted
5. “Feeling of detachment or estrangement from others” which, for siblings, brings home the feelings of being adjunct to the process and subjugated to those who lost spouses, children and parents.

6. A “restricted range of affect” produced by the ambiguous nature of the loss, i.e. a provisional existence.

7. A “sense of foreshortened future” because the expectation of a parallel existence with one’s sibling is now lost forever.

For Condition D, two of five criteria must be present which may likely be indicated by subjects in this study including “difficulty falling or staying asleep,” “irritability or outbursts of anger,” “difficulty concentrating,” “hyper-vigilance” and “exaggerated startle response.” The symptoms of A, B and C must be more than one month in duration and constitute “significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.” It is important to note that the DSM includes specifiers signifying “acute” PTSD lasting less than three months, “chronic” PTSD lasting more than three months and “with delayed onset” occurring six months after the stressor, 9/11 in this case. This seems to set the stage for a host of possibilities relative to this particular disorder.

In a New York Times article just prior to the tenth anniversary of 9/11, it was reported that:

10,000 firefighters, police officers and civilians exposed to the terrorist attacks were found to have post-traumatic stress disorder, and a kind of mass grieving. Many of them have yet to recover (Hartocollis, 2011, p. A1).

The article reported many cases fitting the criteria of Condition D of PTSD, most often complaining of difficulty in sleeping, anger, inability to concentrate and fear of impending doom. It goes on to say that it is impossible to know how many people have

9/11-related PTSD because the three city agencies that record such statistics do not have access to the files of private doctors and therapists or to those who did not seek treatment.

Neither was there any way to assess those who experienced Acute Stress Disorder (DSM 308.3). ASD is PTSD's cousin of much less duration that includes features of somatization of anxiety with feelings of destabilization and feeling overwhelmed. In addition, there is secondary trauma for those who did not have immediate exposure, but are subject to the ongoing recreating of the traumatic event through stories, media exposure and, especially, participation in recovery efforts after the fact. Galea, Ahern, Resnick, Kilpatrick, Bucuvalas, Gold and Vlohov (2002) completed a study of "psychological sequelae" six months after the attacks using a sample of the population of New York City that lived below 110th Street. Their findings indicated that 7.5% of their participants reported PTSD symptoms and 9.7% reported depressive symptoms. Extrapolating these data to the entire population south of 110th Street in New York City suggested that 67,000 people were susceptible to PTSD and 87,000 people were susceptible to depression as a result of the attacks. The study was unclear as to possible relationships to those who died in the attacks. It was even less clear as to the effects of those whose perceived proximity to the World Trade Center granted them a sense of archetypal representation of New York City as commuters who passed through its portals, residents of the boroughs who viewed Manhattan as the center of their world of work or tourists who saw the Twin Towers as symbols of American ingenuity and superiority. These, too, are unrepresented populations.

There is the expectation that there will be a surge in patients reporting PTSD symptoms around and after the tenth anniversary. The New York City WTC Health Registry became the largest post-disaster health registry in the country after 9/11 enrolling 71,000 individuals who had direct exposure to the attacks and their aftermath. Surveys that were completed in the two to three years and five to six year periods after the attack showed that 19 % of the registry (13,500 people) suffered from PTSD symptoms that persisted after six years (Brackbill, Hadler, DiGrande, Ekenga, Farfel, Friedman, Perlman, Stellman, Walker, Wu, Yu, & Thorpe, 2009). A current survey is in progress marking the tenth anniversary, the results of which are not yet available.

Just world beliefs.

Making sense of traumatic events in the world is a function of Just World Beliefs (JWB) (Kaiser, Vick & Major, 2004). It provides a sense of orderliness and predictability in the world. People who endorse JWB tend to be able to make sense of adverse events by either blaming the victim or seeking revenge. According to Lerner (1991), most cultures adhere to the societal norms that bad things happen to bad people who do bad things. Conversely, those who do good are appropriately rewarded, the virtuous received their just due and good always triumphs over evil. This has less to do with fairness and is more about balance and moral judgments and that can be very dependent on the moral compass of those doing the judging. It is conceivable, then, that some may conclude that a victim of rape was asking for it by virtue of dress, actions and/or venue. The victim here is to blame. To take that to a further conclusion, terrorists would aver that they have a moral and religious obligation to carry out destruction in the name of their holy cause.

Their ideology sees their targets as the epitome of evil. A just world belief urges the struggle against evil (Lerner, 2003).

While there may have been some who felt American foreign policy was to blame, in the case of the 9/11 attacks, Americans felt a sense of identity with the victims in that they were innocent and undeserving of the fate imposed upon them. The prevailing thought was anyone could have been a victim including self or a loved one. There was a great sense of sympathy for those who died and their families as evidenced by the great number of blood donations to help surviving victims and monetary donation to support the families of the victims. Similarly, American flags popped up everywhere from homes to cars to lapel pins to the point that the demand far exceed the supply and during the first years after the disaster, airwaves were inundated with patriotic songs. The country consolidated around the attacks and presented in solidarity setting the stages for the second reaction to assault on perceived JWB in the form of revenge. America went to war and, in the beginning, the country felt validated and vindicated in pursuit of revenge for the fallen, revenge for attacks on our soil and revenge for a violation of JWB.

Summary of the Literature Review

The literature reviewed provides a rich reservoir of data in each of the relative domains, i.e. sibling relations, grief and loss, sibling grief, continuing bonds and 9/11. The data on sibling relations points overwhelmingly to a complex system of interactions and influences that typically span the course of a life time exceeding associations with parents, spouses, and children with respect to time in that association. There are existential dialogues on all human dimensions that establish a reciprocal attachment

protocol for developmental access to each other across the lifespan that may enable navigation amid the perils of childhood years and the challenges of later life. As such, we have come to appreciate a sibling relationship as phenomenon of endurance. A phenomenon that is capable of both embracing and transcending everyday contexts. The components of emotional support, learning opportunities, coping simulations, availability and behavioral cues through modeling, are coupled with negative emotional responses, maladaptive influences, hostility or apathy and social contagion bringing to the table a mosaic of characteristics and attributes unique to the sibling dyad.

Grief and loss are subjects of vast social interest and extensive research both empirical and conceptual that reaches back to the dawn of human civilization to the current day literature in both quantitative and qualitative inquiry in an unending progression of efforts to understand its nature and place in our collective and individual psyches. Though the quest for knowledge on the subject may never be complete, it seems we have reached a point in our understanding to come to accept that death is not the opposite of life, but, rather, an integral part of it. The notion of loss and the expectations of the human reaction to it have been examined from many perspectives, in many contexts and for the many permutations of relationship and attachment. From this, we can understand the ubiquity of the phenomenon while embracing the uniqueness as it applies in each situation. Theorists from Freud on have pondered the experience from the standpoint of one of life's predicaments signifying an intense existential characteristic that impacts humans on physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and spiritual dimensions. Individuals suffer on each of these levels in an order predicated by their

natural inclinations and personal coping mechanisms. Their distinct thresholds of stress, too, are grounded in these character traits. Common sense makes it logical and decades of research make it indisputable that grief and loss are extraordinary challenges to the human spirit. Nevertheless, in the final analysis, the human spirit does not shy away from a challenge. Instead, individuals existentially confront it by identifying the threat, evaluating choices and options, reframing the personal construct, integrating lessons learned, and seeking resolution through a process designed to relocate to a position of safety.

Attachment figures play important roles throughout life in terms of perceived notions of safety and refuge. Such figures evolve and morph through the developmental stages and life tasks to provide a sense of confidence and strength in meeting and tackling the tests and obstacles society and the world impose, as well as impacting our ability to transact for a positive outcome. The loss of an attachment figure can be a blow to one's sense of security and make former points of reference forfeit.

Upon losing a significant attachment figure, there can be a propensity to seek a symbolic continuance of the broken relationship in a futile attempt to reestablish physical proximity. The concept of continuing bonds fulfills the promise of maintaining a parallel existence with the deceased by the selective use of objects, rituals and other forms of symbolic expression to bridge the gap that now exists between the survivor and the deceased.

Sibling grief represents a shattering of preconceived notions of normalcy and the expectation of an ongoing, lifelong dialogue with one's sibling. Siblings can be viewed as

attachment figures by virtue of their everyday access, totality of ongoing interactions, potential for mutual influence and intimate sharing of beliefs, feelings and attitudes based on the familial framework through which they were nurtured.

There is little one can say about 9/11 to truly capture the enormity of the event. It was, in many respects, an assault on the ability to consciously observe, comprehend and make meaning. Personal experience in the New York subway system in the week after 9/11 left images of ashen, uncertain faces parading past in a shuffle of despair. 9/11 was an event of immense confusion and fear and the media seemed intent on reporting a linear presentation, a program that progressed unending through the first few weeks and months; remained at a lulled, but potentially explosive presence throughout that first year that was viewed as justification for retribution; and fused with American identity. Memorializing victims and reframing victims as heroes helped start the restorative process by reworking the notion of not foreseeing and preventing the tragedy into something achievable and, then, working forward from there. Idiomatic expressions and American flags became revered mediations that were integrated into the monolith that was termed 9/11. Americans, as a nation, were the people to whom this was done and that sentiment was the antecedent to a renewed resolve to avenge the fallen. Americans accessed both legs of the Dual Process Model (Stroebe & Schut, 1999). They attended to restoration-oriented work in the investigation of every detail pertaining to the attacks, focusing on what and how to rebuild, and creating a meaning system based on very subjective Just World Beliefs that included retribution by military means upon perceived perpetrators and their supporters. They attended to loss-oriented work by first

concentrating on recovery efforts and then, initiating lasting, as well as cyclical tributes to the victims (a continuing bond); endeavoring to stabilize the victims' spouses, children and parents (no mention of siblings); the innovative treatment theories and interventions, methods relative to disaster response and clinical mental health; and attempting to find meaning in what happened and how it has affected America's place in the world.

In many peer-reviewed articles whether research inquiry, practice focused, or conceptual in nature, the thrust of the writing is concerned with the psychological state of observers, victims, and first responders. There is little empirical reporting about the psychological impact on family members. It is rare to see literature that is specific to individuals deemed a 9/11 sibling, and there is no evidence of research on 9/11 siblings vis-à-vis continuing bonds. The literature is rich in attention to survivors of trauma, resilience, PTSD, capacity for survival and ambiguous loss, all of which are generalizable in part or in full to the various and intricate dynamics of the event and its aftermath. The subsequent development of psychological issues presents an unending list of possibilities to study and decipher. Ambiguous loss takes a central position in the debate over the nature of 9/11 grief, grief work, and meaning-making, and shapes the dialogue around the complexity of the psychological after-effects and the diagnosis and treatment thereof. Most of the 9/11 literature forwards PTSD as the overwhelming disorder affecting the survivors of 9/11, the responders to 9/11, the families of 9/11, observers of 9/11 (even through media reporting) and, in many cases, those living in proximity to the World Trade Center site in New York. Response to that demand must be doubled in reaction to

the prevalence of PTSD in active duty and retired service men and women who have suffered the effects of the long war of retribution.

The information in and understanding of the plethora of peer-reviewed literary presentations provides a structural framework on which to attach and arrange the first person, conscious, “natural attitudes” (Husserl, 1939) as experienced in the live-in life. The complexity of the variables (sibling relations, grief reactions, sibling loss, continuing bonds and 9/11) presents a challenge to appreciate the full impact of 9/11 as it pertains to Siblings of 9/11. The qualitative nature of this study will bring into focus the lived experience of the participants through the interview process for a ground level, personal view of their unique grief process over the past 11 years and the continuing bonds they may have created to help cope and bring the process to some sense of resolution.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Research

The foundations of clinical exploration, therapeutic association and the basis from which they developed was from the perspective of understanding the experiences of individuals – the experience as seen through their eyes in their lived-in, storied life. People tell their experience through stories and those stories are the essence of their experience. They do not exist in a vacuum, but are assembled within a context. The stories, then, are a subjective integration of experience with context (Moen, 2006). The stories that participants tell within the context of the phenomenon of 9/11 include a perspective that is at once intensely personal while, at the same time, part of a larger social framework. That larger social framework includes many voices that speak from a platform that advances from human reactions to that occurrence, yet each is unique in its personal construct. There is an implication that in recounting the circumstances, the single voice becomes multi-voiced by virtue of that larger social framework of that event and of what it means or, perhaps, more acutely, the ongoing struggle to find meaning where there appear to be none. The multi-voiced construct becomes the overarching essence of peoples' conscious understanding (Hays & Singh, 2011; Merriam, 2009). Gathering stories and recognizing their value within a larger social framework implies a gestalt where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This, in turn, implies an overlying framework that connects the individual stories through common themes (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007).

Qualitative interview research approach is the study of peoples' conscious experiences (Merriam, 2009) that employs a methodology uniquely constructed to allow participants to tell their accounts as they see it in their lives. Husserl (1939) called it a "natural attitude," to see the world as it is and to experience it as it is lived. It calls for an empathic approach, i.e. seeing the world not as one in the shoes of the participant, but as the participant in their shoes to truly understand the first-person view of their world. The empathic approach, however, must maintain the integrity of the process insofar as ensuring it is non-judgmental and consistently reflexive (Hays & Singh, 2012). I must interject here that a non-judgmental stance, however moral and principled, does not view reflexivity simply as an accessory, but demands it. As such, I must constantly self-examine to recognize what I, the researcher, am bringing to the process, more so in light of my positionality. There develops a co-construction between myself and the participants implying that my very presence and the questions I ask facilitate the formation of the narrative. There must be a reduction process where I attempt to isolate the overriding norms imposed by society and my own positionality to embrace only that part of the narrative that conveys the meaning of what it is to live within the participant's particular context, one that is subject to the exigencies of a particular set of circumstances. The point is to transcend beliefs about the order of things, about what is standard and natural according to my worldview. In doing so, I will be better able to understand what is essential in the participant's worldview as opposed to what is merely incidental to it, accidental in it (Wertz, 2005) or impacted by my expectations of it.

Language as the way we communicate is filled with symbols. Nevertheless, it is the primary way in which we can access people's feelings. The data collected in qualitative research then may be considered "language data" to distinguish it from the more static data of a written survey (Polkinghorne, 2005). In accepting that, we can see how the lived experience as communicated by a participant in a qualitative research study is a construction of the participant's use, awareness, understanding and competency of language. Utilizing language, both verbal and non-verbal, as the primary method of data collection enables a richer descriptive power (Polkinghorne, 2005). The nature of the qualitative tradition uniquely positions me and the participants to generate a collaborative account of the participant's experience and the personal meaning that they attribute to the experience. The methodology, quite simply, allows individuals to tell their story (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2009). Their story, more profoundly, allows access to the innermost thoughts, feelings and constructions of the participant in a safe, non-threatening environment.

Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to bring into focus the complexity of the lived experiences of a purposive sampling of individuals. It asks the question:

What is the lived-in experience over the past 10 years of those who have lost a sibling on 9/11?

I have probed for elaboration in how they have coped with their loss over the 11 years following that tragedy and how the 9/11 community of siblings may have maintained a primary relationship part of which may be through the use of continuing bonds in

whatever form that may take. Should such bonds be a relevant part of the participants' journeys, I seek further to understand and appreciate the nature, significance and influence of continuing bonds that may be created and preserved over this time. Have those bonds evolved during that time to conserve meaning? I did not introduce the notions of ambiguity or disenfranchisement, but left it to the respective participant to present these concepts in their own time and in their own way. They were, indeed, relevant. How their perceptions of if and how meaning could have been made in the course of grief work was probed. In finding answers to these questions, the study endeavors to differentiate the unique worldview of this cadre of individuals as influenced by their 11 year journey and, in turn to learn if there is a perception among participants as to whether they have impacted the phenomenological sweep of 9/11 as an iconic event in history.

Qualitative interview research methodology is uniquely poised to explore basic human processes from the perspective of those who lived the experience. Hays and Singh (2012) state that qualitative inquiry is about the "who, what, where, why and how of a specific phenomenon" (p. 8). Using an inductive approach, qualitative inquiry builds knowledge upon knowledge and accesses understanding by exploring and elaborating upon the aforementioned dimensions rather than using a deductive, theory-driven data collection method. By using a semi-structured interview (Appendix D), i.e. a "grand tour" question with select probes central to the story, the participants have a voice that is, truly, their own. There have been variations in that voice across participants.

Participants of the Study

The participants are those people whose lives are substantially connected to the phenomenon to be studied, i.e. the loss of a sibling in the attacks of 9/11. As such, I used a purposeful sample of individuals who have suffered the loss of a sibling on 9/11. As recounted in earlier sections, the sibling relationship is the most enduring and influential of associations that are quite common as experienced by up to 90% of individuals (Cicarelli, 1989). Longevity of that association is fundamental to the nature of the relationship in that one is likely to associate with a sibling for far longer than years spent with parents or spouses. Considering such longevity of association and the unique and intimately shared history of the family dynamic, siblings may be considered an actual life partner (Kluger, 2006; Nandwana & Katoch, 2009).

Insofar that the loss of a sibling is the main criterion for participant selection, such individuals represent a relatively small subgroup of the overall population of the country with a common experience among them, i.e. grieving for their sibling. Furthermore, they represent an even smaller cadre of the overall population deemed the Families of 9/11. Access to this group of individuals can best be achieved through services that cater to that common experience. Participants were recruited through invitational postings on two listservs dedicated to service the families of those who died on 9/11. It was expected that all of these listservs and contacts may generate far more respondents than necessary and that originally was the case. On the other hand, it is important to note that those who subscribe to such services are individuals who have intentionally reached out for support and are proactive in working through their respective grief processes. This fact

presupposes that recruitment efforts will not reach individuals who have chosen to remain apart from the services that deliver support and information.

In consideration of the sensitivities of potential participants and my expectation of marginalization of some siblings in their respective journeys, I was mindful of the effect of rejection. With that in mind, I avoided a mass invitation and remained within the confines of the two listservs. The criteria for inclusion as participants in the study are simply that respondents must be English speaking individuals who have lost a sibling in the attacks of 9/11, were 21 years of age or older on 9/11/01 and their sibling would have been 21 or older at the time of their death. There was no delineation as to the site of the siblings' deaths, be it the World Trade Center, the Pentagon or any of the four planes that crashed that day. Potential participants were selected based on that criteria and recruitment was stopped after a purposeful convenience sample (Hays & Singh, 2012) of 11 individuals who fit the criteria was realized. Respondents were then contacted and I explained the purpose and scope of the study while screening the sample for the preferred characteristics. While a purposeful sample would best include a level of diversity vis-à-vis gender, race, gender of the deceased sibling and other critical demographics, I was aware that a diverse population may not be achieved. Nearly all the respondents were female with one exception and a second invitation was posted on one of the listservs targeting male siblings.

As stated, an Introduction and Invitational Script (Appendix B) was posted on two listservs that serve as a news outlet, clearing houses of information and support groups for the Families of 9/11. They are *911-list-serv* by Arnie Karotkin and *wdoyle-911-*

support-group by Bill Doyle. As these resources catered to the greater 9/11 community, siblings would be a much smaller subset of the overall membership. To target siblings more selectively, I contacted a therapist who facilitated a siblings' bereavement group after September 11th (9/11) asking that she distribute my script to former group members. The group was facilitated from 2002 to early 2004 with open rolling engagement for over 30 individuals. Contact to the larger group membership was understandably restricted after a great many years.

The original respondent pool was 26 siblings who were interested in becoming participants. This pool consisted of 25 females and one male. A second invitation was sent out through Arnie Karotkin's *911-list-serv* explaining the lack of male participation to which five male siblings replied. The count then stood at 25 females and 6 males. The selection process was based first criteria already outlined and then, on their ability to correspond personally or by Skype (a teleconferencing medium) or, lastly, by phone. Of the females, five requested to opt out, three had left incomplete contact information and nine either did not respond to follow up outreach or continually rescheduled and put off the interview. Of the males, one requested to opt out and two did not respond to follow up outreach. This left a final participant pool of eight female and three male siblings.

The names of the participants and the deceased siblings, as well as certain circumstances, i.e. places of residence have been altered to preserve confidentiality. Profiles have been prepared (Appendix E) presenting the participants in demographic terms, as well as their respective characterizations of themselves and their siblings, and as in my observations and perceptions during the interview process.

The participants ranged in age from 50 to 64 with an average of 55 years old. The overwhelming majority of initial respondents had lost a brother on 9/11 and of the final 11 participants, nine had lost a brother and two had lost a sister. All participants with the exception of one female were married. Four of the females and one of the males did not have children of their own.

Nine of the participants live in the Greater New York area. One male is from Washington, D.C. and works in the defense industry in the Pentagon. Another male lives and works in a rural section of Upstate New York. All 11 of the participants were raised in New York City, Long Island and New Jersey.

All respondents including those who did not participate were Caucasian with the exception of one Latina and one Asian-American female. Of the participants, two males and two females were Jewish, but did not follow their religion. The rest described themselves as having grown up in the Christian faith, but only two considered themselves practicing.

Hays and Singh (2012) state it is conceivable that the number of participants may not be determined prior to the study. There is no formula that determines the number of participants, but as data and knowledge emerge, a determination was made as to the saturation point of the data as evidenced by replication and redundancy of information. I believe that my final number of 11 participants engaging in an in-depth interview provided a rich representation of their experience. Quantity is not a goal, but, rather, quality and relevance of engagement. My intention was for the interviews to last approximately 90 minutes, to be audio recorded and, then, transcribed. Depending on the

richness of responses, I anticipated follow up questions to clarify and elaborate certain responses.

The prospective participants were informed as to confidentiality and its limits. Interview recordings, transcriptions and the ultimate reporting of results bear no identifying features, but instead, identities were coded and known only to myself. Digital archives are kept on a personal use, password protected computer and paper records are in a locked cabinet. Both the computer and the cabinet are located in my private office.

Of the 11 participants, seven were interviewed in person, three were interviewed via Skype and one was interviewed by telephone. Two participants responded to the Doyle invitation and four participants responded to the Karotkin invitation. One male was recommended by his sister who was one of the female respondents. Four were former members of the sibling bereavement group and presumably known to each other as a result, but to my knowledge, were not aware of each other's participation in the study.

None of the participants witnessed the attacks of 9/11 in person. The one male participant who worked in the Pentagon was across the country at a conference that day. All were either watching TV at the time or were called by a family member to turn on the TV immediately after the first plane, Flight 11, struck the North Tower of the World Trade Center.

All interviews lasted a minimum of one and one-half hours with most lasting nearly two hours. While the researcher followed an interview protocol/discussion guide, only one of the participants needed to be prompted to tell her story in full. The other ten seemed energized and eager. My role became one of guiding the participants through the

various time frames of their respective 11 year experience and keeping them on track from a linear perspective, as well as probing for deeper details, meaning and significance where I thought it relevant. It became obvious early on in the process that nearly all of the participants would easily continue to elaborate their stories without interruption.

Data Collection

In such an interview study with purposeful sample of 11 participants, data was collected by means of an in-depth, semi-structured interview (Appendix D) with each participant. The quality of the data was, no doubt, influenced by the relationship of participant to me, the researcher. Developing the participants' stories was a collaborative effort that, to some extent, was shaped by the method by which they were elicited. Perhaps, the eagerness of most participants mitigated my preconceived notion that my questions would shape the narrative. While the inquiry did to a certain extent, I believe that at least 10 of the participants would have proceeded as they did irrespective of who else was in the room. The setting must necessarily include an atmosphere of candidness, sincerity and trust. Such an atmosphere is intended to mitigate a participant's tendency to present a more attractive image of themselves to the researcher (Polkinghorne, 1994). In addition, the stories' accuracy is dependent on the participants' perception of events, emotions and impressions both over time and in the moment. While there are facts to the case, there is the lived life that was actually experienced and memories that may have been colored by "images, feelings, sentiments, desires, thoughts and meanings" (Moen, 2006, p.7) known only to the person whose life and experience it is. Participants told their stories and defined them in the telling to communicate the value and significance they

wished me to hear (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). It is crucial that I allow development of the story from that experience through skillful and purposeful questions and probes that evoke fundamental, yet mindful responses (Hays & Wood, 2011). In the end, it must be acknowledged that some participants were more adept than others at representing their experience in a meaningful way (Polkinghorne, 1994). In order to be sure I am getting it correctly, I re-engaged 10 of the 11 participants as a focus group for member checking (Hays & Singh, 2012) or respondent validation (Merriam, 2009). One of the participants did not respond in an articulate way throughout the exchange and it was my assessment to eliminate that participant from the exercise. I engaged the other ten in five specific areas for a total of 22 times. I did not engage each of the ten in all five areas, but chose to seek elaboration where I thought the initial data was salient and could be developed further or where the initial data was confusing, divergent from other responses or simply lacking. Engaging in continued dialogue solicited feedback to determine the accuracy and correctness of the data as I interpret it in my analysis.

Secondly, I engaged the assistance of a “critical friend” for debriefing to further confirm to relevance of my analysis vis-à-vis the data collected. Both member checking and the critical friend helped establish trustworthiness. The “critical friend” is someone used by the researcher to discuss the work and, in doing so, can provide counsel and critique. In the end, such a resource can provide the perspective of a new set of eyes. Gerardi (2007) avers that the critical friend can help substantiate and endorse the information and its interpretation. As such, we discussed the overall research in terms of participants, central themes, research question and method of acquiring data. She allowed

me time to tell of my musings and questioned me about how those musings might influence my plan for presenting the data. She was particularly insightful about my timeline, i.e. what data represented sibling relationships before the event, which data was circumstantial to external forces and the categorization of perceived themes. She consistently challenged my thinking from a “devil’s advocate” position pushing me to articulate what it was I was driving at and to express my interpretation in a more convincing manner. We agreed that the set-up of themes needed rethinking and revamping though not in an overly substantial way.

To some extent, the participants may be aware of my positionality in the circumstances of 9/11. There was the expectation that the perception I could better identify with their stories and they could better identify with me which would enhance the connection with each participant and the process as a whole. On the other hand, I remained conscious that the same perception may cause responses to be shaded differently when presented to me than if told to someone further removed from the precipitating event. In the end, I endeavored not to disclose my positionality until after the each interview. When the interview was over and the audio tape was turned off, I spoke candidly and answered questions that seven of the participants posed about my connection to 9/11.

The in-person interviews were all my private office, three were via Skype in my home office and one was by telephone. In all cases, at some point prior to the interview, the participant received and were asked to read and sign an informed consent document (Appendix A), as well as a demographic survey and sibling profile (Appendix C). They

were either mailed back to me or brought at the time of the interview. Considering the sensitive nature of the topic, it was made clear to the participants that the interview may be discontinued and/or they may withdraw from the study at any time at their discretion without prejudice. The interview process was facilitated through the use of an interview or discussion guide (Appendix D) consisting of “grand tour” question to elicit individual stories. Probes followed up particular questions to elicit further elaboration and to adjust the interview as necessary. The following represents a sampling of some of the topics the inquiry will touch upon:

1. Attempting to bring the participant back to the earliest memories of the precipitating event by means of a “grand tour” question: “Describe what it was like for you to lose a sibling on 9/11.” Probe: *Reaction to the loss? Family dynamics? Closeness/conflicts?*
2. The Grief Process: “How do you see yourself coping with your loss?” Probe: “To whom was information about your brother/sister first given? How did you get information about developments/events?” Probe: *Marginalization/ Disenfranchisement /Relationship with main /official contact person?*
3. Continuing Bonds: “After 9/11, what were some of the ways you honored your brother’s/sister’s memory?” Probe: *Photos, rituals, objects. Ground Zero? Maintenance/evolution?*
4. Sibling’s imagined perspective: “What would your sibling say about all that has occurred over the past 10 years? What would you say to him/her?”
5. To the here and now: “Can you talk a little about what it feels like today, to sit here and talk about your journey and your brother/sister?”

Interviews with discussion guides are usually necessary when the phenomenon is multifaceted, huge in scale or, for that matter, elusive. The important point is that the data must be concrete in that it reflects great detail; not hypotheses, guesses, opinions, interpretations or generalizations. Subsequent participant interviews were adjusted or had questions added based on the responses of the earlier interviewees or as unforeseen and unexpected foci emerged. Rich descriptions may impart data that transcends even the participants understanding of the phenomenon (Wertz, 2005).

Upon initial analysis of the interviews and the responses given, I selected a subset (10) of the original participant roster for the purpose of member checking and validation of salient points and suggestive themes in five select areas. Three to five of the 10 were re-engaged in each of the five areas as deemed appropriate and necessary. It is important to remember that the interview process itself is not the objective the study, but merely the means by which the researcher may reach the objective. Qualitative research data is emergent, i.e. no one can know for sure what participants will impart nor can I be sure I will touch upon the themes that are of great importance to the participants. As such, the interview process was tweaked, revisited and elaborated upon throughout the data collection phase at times where it was deemed appropriate (Potter & Hepburn, 2005).

Throughout the data collection process, I kept a researcher's journal to record impressions, record significant events not captured on tape and to help ensure that I am getting it right. As Moen (2006) recounts Walcott's (1990) caution, we must endeavor "to not get it all wrong" (p. 8). Themes and meaning units untangled in the analysis phase will have deeper significance and will be tied more closely to the context when compared

to journal notes of observations that were written in the moment. The journal contains my reflections, feelings, hunches, methodological concerns, and intuitions about the information as it is related, as well as recognition of non-verbals, collateral data and perceived biases imparted throughout the interview process (Hays & Singh, 2012). The journal notes afford me the ability to monitor the elements that define rigor in the qualitative research process during the process. Those elements are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability and will be discussed in detail in a later section of this chapter.

Data Analysis

Qualitative inquiry seeks to study a phenomenon in its natural environment in order to illuminate and make sense of the interpretation brought out by examination of peoples' stories and the meaning they attribute to those stories. Qualitative inquiry must be methodological, systematic, and requires critical thinking, creativity and reflexivity to approach any level of rigor. The process calls for reading the description, re-reading it looking for "meaning units," reflecting on the "meaning units" looking for insight and revelations about the phenomenon under investigation, and synthesizing reflections into an essence that expresses the structure of the experience (Wertz, 2005). The point here is to fill the gap between reality and knowledge that requires qualitative understanding. Analysis will occur simultaneously with the collection of the data. As data is collected, the emergent nature of the goals of the study will come into sharper focus. That progression will necessarily refine the collection process.

In the analysis of the “language data” (Polkinghorne, 2005), I transcribed each interview verbatim and read the first time through for a broad understanding of the expression made by the subjects. It is during the re-reading that I began to identify core ideas and differentiate meanings, codes, patterns and repetitions within the transcriptions. During this process, I started to categorize information, i.e. code it into broad classifications for further and ultimate cataloguing into more discrete groups. Throughout the analysis, information may be reorganized into a logical sequence of meaningful components. There is a posture of not necessarily looking for the obvious, but for reading between the lines, seeing connections that even the participants may not be aware of and being sensitive to nuances that convey meaning, subtleties that are suggestive and clues that entreat greater elaboration.

In the interview process, I feel successful in joining with the participant and attending to all the details of the experience as it is communicated. It became a matter of examining and comparing part to part, part to whole and whole to part to understand the experience and to draw out the essence of the structure of the phenomenon, a critical part of the analysis (Wertz, 2005). There were many replications, repetitive data and some information that was peripheral to the phenomenon, in which case I made intentional decisions on how to report such data.

Merriam (2009) advises that there is no formal, standardized, consensual format as to how qualitative researchers should present their findings. However, a qualitative study is basically telling a story. Considering that that the focus of this study is the lived experience and unfolding of the grief process that disclosed high levels of ambiguity by

all participants and feelings of disenfranchisement by most with a sidebar of probes into the relevance of the creation and use of continuing bonds with the lost siblings on 9/11, analysis of data proceeded with an appreciation of those elements. Results are thematic in nature and I reported in a coherently way on the uniqueness of each experience, as well as commonalities across participants.

The initial classification of data indicated broad categories with 104 sub-categories. A further analysis revealed redundancies and repetitions both conceptually and practical, as well as specificity of emotion that displayed itself at the initial period of shock and confusion and was recurrent at many points throughout. The data was continually refined to be responsive to the research question and to assure mutual exclusivity. The importance and saturation of the data was considered in terms of commonalities across participants, that is, simply how many times certain elements were mentioned. Data was also considered in terms of its uniqueness, that is, introducing new information that had not been in the stories of other participants or appreciated in other contexts.

Once data was categorized according to themes, the data is displayed as an overview and then, by theme utilizing the participants' voices (quotes) where necessary to make salient points, to demonstrate common perceptions and to illustrate unique contributions to the understanding of the phenomenon. My researcher's journal helped round out the contextual elements evident in the data collection section. The main thrust of exposure to a multi-dimensional examination was to provide a thick description of the

findings through a careful blending of the participants' voices with the researcher's intuition, interpretation and understanding.

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established in accordance with the criteria of qualitative research. This study took the responsibility of demonstrating rigor to the reader based on disclosure of the deliberate steps taken to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability to the degree possible (Hunt, 2011).

Credibility

Credibility determines how we ensure rigor in the process and how we communicate that rigor to others. Is it a believable study? That is best accomplished through my prolonged and persistent contact with the participant. Participants were contacted to schedule an in-depth interview. Interest in the nature, scope and reasons for this study necessarily prompted a conversation where a free flow of ideas materialized at initial contact. The contact continued in gathering detailed and pertinent information and, then with a select few, to possibly touch base on a second occasion to corroborate and clarify that information by further review. So, there were opportunities to confirm data saturation by being reflexive throughout the process with thick description in the reporting and, in the end, with member checking, that is, checking back with the participants for correctness. Reflexivity refers to ongoing consideration of the researcher's role, thoughts, assumptions and the lens through which the data is received and interpreted. Some of this is apparent in my journal. Hays and Singh (2012) suggest utilizing Carl Rogers' core counseling conditions as a guide to the researcher in

remaining reflexive while cautioning that qualitative research is not counseling. They recommend being authentic (contrasting the internal world of the researcher and the external world of the research itself), non-judgmental (recognizing and coming to terms with strong feelings before, during or after the research process) and empathic (reserve judgment of accuracy in the reception of participants' stories). Thick description is a technique that seems to be idiomatic the qualitative process and refers to "thickness not only in the interpretations of the participants' stories, but in the context in which those stories live and have evolved" (Morrow, 2005). Since human beings in the forms of the researcher and participants are the primary instruments in qualitative research, it is incumbent upon me in the final write up of results to provide such thick description in presenting the first-person, ground-level account of the participant's stories within the context in which they occurred.

Transferability

Transferability can be tricky and may be dependent on the subjective understanding of the reader. It is not an objective of the research, per se, but, as previously mentioned, when the researcher presents enough thick description, it allows the reader to decide how the uniqueness of the participants' experiences may be transferable to another scenario, context or another study. It is important that I give enough information about myself, the context of the phenomenon, how the data was obtained and processed, and the nature and extent of the relationship that will surely exist between the participants and me. This helps both the reader and me to decide how far the findings of the study may transfer. Individual analyses by themselves do not present

knowledge that can be considered general in the traditional sense, but it is possible to identify commonalities that exist across several participants and are verified in more than one instance and, perhaps, in other settings and, in that respect, I recognize the reality.

Dependability

Dependability asks whether the study was carried out in a consistent and logical way. It would depend on whether or not the process of the study and the reporting of such are precise enough to be considered consistent with qualitative conventions. Replication, per se, is not a convention of qualitative research. However, it is conceivable that some of the findings of the study can be seen in terms of sibling loss in other traumatic settings.

Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the fact that the overall integrity of the findings in a qualitative study is dependent on the method, eloquence and persuasiveness of the researcher in reporting the way the data was collected, the manner in which it was analyzed, the analytical process and the final interpretation. The fact that the researcher is the instrument and is in close proximity to the point of developing a relationship with the participants begs the question: was there interference from the researcher whether in the collection process or in the interpretation or in the reporting? To establish confirmability, I utilized an ongoing reflexive journal for the purpose of keeping accurate notes on the process as it occurred, my reflections and thoughts on the data and emotional content being conveyed and reported on how this study is affecting me throughout the process. In the final analysis, the question is asked whether the reported data genuinely

reflects the stories that the participants have presented (Hays & Singh, 2012; Merriam, 2009; Moen, 2006; Morrow, 2005; Polkinghorne, 2005).

Ethical Issues

Participants were informed of the nature and purpose of the study and of their participation. Each participant was clearly informed of Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval process and outcome, as well as the name and number of the dissertation chair and IRB contact should they require further verification.

Participants were recruited by means of referrals and posting as reported earlier. Each potential participant was screened prior for preferred characteristics. For example, participants must be over 21 on September 11, 2001 as their siblings would have been at the time of their death. It must be stated here that every respondent to the postings and referrals fit the required characteristics with the possible exception of those who had initial trepidation and withdrew.

Each participant was briefed as to the details of informed consent acknowledging their right to refuse any question or to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice. Their participation is completely voluntary. The methods I used to protect confidentiality were explained with regard to security of records and audio tapes and use of codes I generated to safeguard the identity of participants. Participants were not personally known to me obviating the question of multiple relationships and the integrity of the data. I must report that one of the male participants showed some interest or concern over the detail of confidentiality. My further explanation allayed his concerns.

Considering the sensitive and emotional nature of the topic being studied, I discussed the possible benefits and risks of participation. The benefits included allowing participants to process their story in a way they have not had the opportunity to do before. This was apparent in response to the last “here-and-now” question asking participants to assess what it was like to speak of their entire 11 year journey in one sitting. Risks could include an adverse emotional response as their stories unfold. That surely happened on several occasion and particularly with one participant who cried throughout dismissing it with “I always cry.” I was sensitive and empathic to the stressors that their telling imposed. Participants were given the opportunity to debrief with me during (“Are you OK?” “Is there anything you wish to say about that?”) or at the end of each interview. In addition, the participants were given my contact information to further debrief, ask questions or to inquire about support services. Two of the participants utilized that information to contact me by sending links to and copies of interviews and writings they had done.

Positionality in Data Collection and Analysis

I was constantly aware that we all have personal biases that can easily influence the interpretation of the data in the collection, analysis or reporting phase and I am no exception as disclosed in the section on Positionality in Chapter One. It was my responsibility to convey the essence of the story in a coherent and unbiased way while maintaining clarity as to whose story it is (Savin-Baden & Niekerk, 2007). It must also be recognized that the participants, too, have biases both in terms of the way they view their experiences and the way they will make meaning to me and speak within the context of

that meaning. The initial intent was to co-construct each interview with each participant implying that the meaning they make of me will impact the interview. More often than not, participants began their stories after initial basic information and needed little prompting to continue. My concern was that they would see a white male of a certain age and know that I am a licensed counselor trained through the master's level and working toward a Ph.D. I wonder now if some would continue their story without regard to who else was in the room. Yet, positive regard and empathic understanding were conveyed and surely impacted the comfort and safety of each participant. It is crucial that the lens through which they view me includes some information about my reasons for interest and the extent of my immersion in the 9/11 experience while, at the same time, without coloring their response in direct appreciation to my circumstance. To that end, I did disclose my own loss relative to that event as disclosed in Positionality in Chapter One after the interview where possible.

It was not as difficult as I imagined it would be to put aside or reduce all personal knowledge, interpretations and positions of reality for the phenomenon being researched though I could easily identify with what was being said. As such, I was concerned that my identification might impose an interpretation that was not truly present in the participant's telling. To offset that, I used my reflexive journal to keep track of myself, my feelings, my ideas and my reactions to the interview process and the responses of the participants rather than trying to pretend that I can put myself aside. Giorgi (2008) states that some qualitative researchers provide a listing of all biases held. He wonders if such an undertaking tends to be more obstructive than liberating. In the final consideration, it

was incumbent upon me to reflect and recognize as many potential biases as possible prior to and during the analytical process to avoid contamination and distortion of the results. I agree with Giorgi (2008) in that the exercise left me feeling constricted and I abandoned it rather quickly. Instead, I paid attention to my own reflexivity as I coded each theme. In the end, there can be no assurance that I have operated in a completely bias-free manner (Giorgi, 2008) though I believe I did as well as possible knowing that in this particular study, it would be difficult to operate from a completely bias-free approach. It is a point in fact that the research interest and design had been developed based on my personal connection to 9/11, as well as the notion of losing a sibling. While I am an only child, my firefighter brother-in-law who was 10 years younger than me and grew up in many respects under my tutelage constitutes many of the imposing aspects of sibling relationships lost that day. The fact that he was fire-fighter adds the element of first responder vs. those working in or visiting the building or as passengers and crew on the doomed flights. Personal experience indicates that in some family members there is a bias as to how victims are viewed, how names are listed on memorials and to what extent the relative categories of victims are assigned a distinction. I continually endeavored to keep that out of my consciousness while maintaining awareness of personal notions that have developed over the past eleven years in order not to trip over unexamined beliefs – a challenging and problematic task, to be sure – and endeavored to view each of the participants on their own merit, for their own stories and for the meaning that each makes in relating their lived-in experience. I was further aware of and acknowledged emotions that might surface on both sides recognizing the human element that prevails.

Significance of the Study

In researching sibling relations and sibling grief within that context, a good deal of the research deals with developmental impact of children who lost siblings from disease or accident. In dealing with adult sibling grief, the causes of death most often cited are suicide, disease (AIDS) or murder. The death of a sibling through murder most closely aligns itself with the circumstances of the loss of a sibling on 9/11, yet it is indisputable that the events surrounding 9/11 are unrivaled in both scope and the difficulty in making meaning in no small way due to the ambiguity of the deaths as well as the availability of remains. While the loss of a sibling is not overly unusual as a circumstance of life and can be expected to some reasonable extent, all the losses within the context of 9/11 were unimaginable and unexpected as were the ensuing consequences. Siblings, in large part, stood apart. They were not the spouse or the children, nor were they the parents. Their part, as society often expects, was to be in a supportive role for the spouses, children and parents. As such, their grief may have been subjugated to the needs of others, the grief process may have been delayed and the profundity of their loss may have been obscured or, even, ignored. This study gives expression to that cadre of individuals whose voices have been muted in the onslaught of emotion and rush of support to those who society deemed to have lost more. Siblings, however, did not lose less.

The tragedy of 9/11 intensified the concept of loss by the additional elements of excessive media coverage imposing a “celebrity” status to the deaths and to the families. The fact that the remains of over 1700 victims were never found whole or in part,

conveys an unprecedented level of ambiguity to the loss and the family members may have suffered through a provisional existence in the futile wait for any semblance of closure. For them, there are no graves to visit. I believe that these participants as siblings whose grief may have been suppressed as they found themselves in caregiver mode have finally have a witness to whom they can tell their stories and to process the means by which they were able to realize and celebrate a symbolic connection to their deceased sibling.

In the end, the findings of this study help understand how siblings deal with the sudden and ambiguous loss of someone through violent means, someone who they fully expected to share their life with. With this may come implications for counselors in how to address such losses and the feelings of a marginalized and forgotten cohort.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

The order in which I report these findings is often not the order in which the data was received. The participants, for the most part, seemed intent at starting at the beginning as they saw it. The beginning for each of them was identified as a number that was both a date and a symbolic marker for the moment they say their lives changed. For them, that number is and will forever be 9/11.

The conception of adult siblings of 9/11 is iconic to this study. The participants from whom the data was elicited represents a cadre of individuals who are foundational to this study and the sum total of the data within. It is their membership in an exclusive “club,” (Ann: “I always tell people that I’ve now become part of a club that I didn’t want to join.”) their individualized experience during a select time in their lives, and the impact of an unprecedented event in American history that attempts to pose an answer to the research question:

“What is the lived-in experience over the past 11 years of those who have lost a sibling on 9/11?”

The rush of information that poured forth from the participants presented a detailed, personal, ground-view description of that lived experience. It was less of an answer and more of a series of sketches that stood in stark contrast to anything prior in their lives and shaped their futures in ways they are still trying to make meaning out of. I conceptualize these adult siblings simply as the Siblings of 9/11. Their stories started by trying to convey how they perceive their relationships with their lost siblings. The grief that these siblings endured is largely dependent on the strength of their relationships. The

relationship as it stood prior to the events of 9/11 mediated by their particular personality factors sets the stage for the reaction and grief journey over the ensuing 11 years.

This has been parsed out by an exploration of their early family dynamics, caregiving roles, friendships and dependencies. The precipitating event is the attacks of 9/11 and the unstoppable, ensuing roller-coaster of emotions during that time. Their recollections of that day – the day many characterize as “the day that changed my life” - and the weeks and months that follow initialized the journey. The story they tell is of how they moved through a process unparalleled in their lives and got to where they are today. In that telling, at times, it was apparent that they surprised themselves and mused over a moment of insight.

Figure 1 is a graphic representation of the demographics and other crucial information about the Adult Siblings of 9/11, as well as of their deceased siblings. Participant numbers 3 and 4 are themselves siblings and, as such, have one deceased sibling in common. All of the siblings died in the attacks on the World Trade Center (WTC). Nine were in the fallen buildings and one was a passenger on Flight 175 which crashed into the South Tower.

#	Participant	Age	Mar	Educ	Reside	Employ	Other sibs	Sibling	9/11 age	Age diff w. part.	Mar	Child	@ WTC?	Floor	Recovery
1	NORA	50	Y	HS	LI	Home	1 younger brother	GREG	35	-4	N	0	NYF D	unk	Full
2	ROSE	52	Y	MA	NJ	Designer	1 older brother	PETER	41	-11 m	Y	2	UTD 175	N/A	Bone
3	TED	53	Y	BA	DC	Pentagon	1 older sister	PAUL	36	-7	Y	2	Work	94	Driver's License
4	LISA	54	Y	MA	NJ	Retiree	1 younger brother	PAUL	36	-8	Y	2	Work	94	Driver's License
5	ANN	64	Y	MA	NJ	Retiree	0	JESSE	49	-5	Y	0	Work	94	None
6	BEN	58	Y	BA	NJ	Office	1 older sister; 2 younger sisters	KARL	36	-11	Y	2	Work	99	Partial
7	LENA	61	N	BA	NJ	unemp	0	WALTER	54	+4	Y	2	Work	105	Partial
8	CASEY	55	Y	HS	NJ	Home	2 older sisters	DENA	35	-10	Y	0	Work	unk	Partial
9	MARY	50	Y	BA	NJ	Office	0	SAL	38	-2	Y	3	Work	unk	None
10	LORAINÉ	62	Y	HS	NJ	Home	1 older brother	TIM	44	-8	Y	2	NYF D	unk	None
11	JACK	53	Y	MA	NY	PR	1 older brother	JERRY	40	-3	N	0	1 st Resp	unk	Partial

Key: Age = age of the participant.
 Mar = Marital status of participant. (Yes or No)
 Educ = Educational level of the participant
 Reside = where the participant currently lives
 9/11 age = the age at which they died
 Age diff. w. part. = the age difference with the participant
 Child = number of children of deceased sibling
 (- younger/=older)

Figure 1

Introduction of Themes

There was a tremendous amount of data collected in interviewing 11 Siblings of 9/11. As unique as their stories were, there were many commonalities across participants grounded in the overall context of 9/11, as well as in their exclusive subset of the overall population of those who lost loved ones that day. Several distinct themes emerged that were unique to a point in time while other themes seemed recurrent across time. It became a matter of deconstructing major points to compare and contrast to lesser, but just as relevant subthemes and trying to understand how they affected each other. It was this merging and melding that produced themes beyond those that are assumed to be part of the experience of the larger circle of the Families of 9/11. The subset of the Siblings of 9/11 went through the many of the same processes of the larger group, but with variations and exigencies that solidified their status as a population unto themselves and worthy of separate examination as an autonomous group.

As their respective stories unfolded and data emerged, it became clear that this group placed an emphasis on certain patterns of experience and behaviors that defined the obstacles they needed to overcome, as well as the passageways they created on their 11 year journey. Three major themes of interest emerged (see Figures 2, 3 & 4). As we know, the event we call 9/11 was persistently in the public eye with unrelenting media exposure and national interest. Questions swirled around the why's and how's of the event for years to be revived through documentaries and rerun news footage on every anniversary. The country launched into a prolonged war that some viewed as preemptive and others as vengeance that left many of the participants hazy about the

impetus and true purpose. However, for the Siblings of 9/11, this was an intensely personal event. The loss of their siblings was a personal loss in the background of national grief. The fact that their sibling went about the normal business on that day never to return and the subsequent disturbing incongruity of no or partial remains created a looming sense of ambiguity. While this feeling is likely consistent with certain other precipitators of loss such as plane crashes and kidnappings, there were several other dimensions, not the least of which was the unavoidable difficulty of grieving in the public eye that created an unwelcomed, celebrity status for the bereaved.

The first primary theme to emerge was the ambiguity of their grief in the face of the public nature of 9/11 or, as I choose to call it, Ambiguity in the Public Eye. All the participants started their grief journey at precisely the same moment. Their recollections of the event and the succeeding weeks and months has a unity of experience that might be expected, i.e. the beautiful day marred by the dark and alarming events that followed. One of the distinctions may be born of the gender difference of the participants and it may prove useful to explore that notion. The public nature succeeded in creating set of circumstances and series of events that put the Siblings of 9/11 in the path of atypical reactions that others may ordinarily have towards the bereaved. Throughout all of this, the Siblings of 9/11 strove to come to grips with the notion that their siblings was, indeed, dead despite the absence of remains and what might be considered a normal ritual of the grief process, a funeral and a burial. The innumerable public memorials at town, county and state levels, as well as schools and other venues became a distraction at first, a burden to some and, in many cases, eventually, a non-event.

A second theme emerged out of the persistent reference to relationships with others, whether close or distant, living or dead, that were gained, lost or renegotiated in some way. I call this theme Connectedness and Severance to denote the element of social interest as it pertains to functioning within and as a part of the human community. In some instances, this theme, too, has some basis in the public nature while, for others, it becomes quite personal in the form of family ruptures, adjustments or the lack thereof and altered roles to accommodate an altered landscape. Connectedness has endured in the face of severance by maintaining a psychological proximity in the absence of physical proximity through continuing bonds to the deceased. Some of this has been conventional and intentional and some is mystical and spiritual. The resources and support available and the manner in which it has been perceived shaped each participant's understanding of where their individual strengths prevailed and where it was deficient.

The third theme that emerged was not offered with the ease and certainty of the former. Nevertheless, it was relevant to the process and most participants recognized it as a necessary part of their journey. I call that theme Meaning and Acceptance. It is important to note that not all the participants were able to think beyond the here and now. Be that as it may, recognition of the milestones encountered, obstacles to be overcome and an exercise in mindfulness allowed each participant to appreciate that there were lessons learned along the way. They have never lost sight of the fact that they are lessons they would rather never have learned because the cost was too high. As they ponder such concepts as meaning, closure and purpose, that cost takes its toll in the realization of a final resolution. Figures 2, 3 and 4 are graphic representations of the main themes.

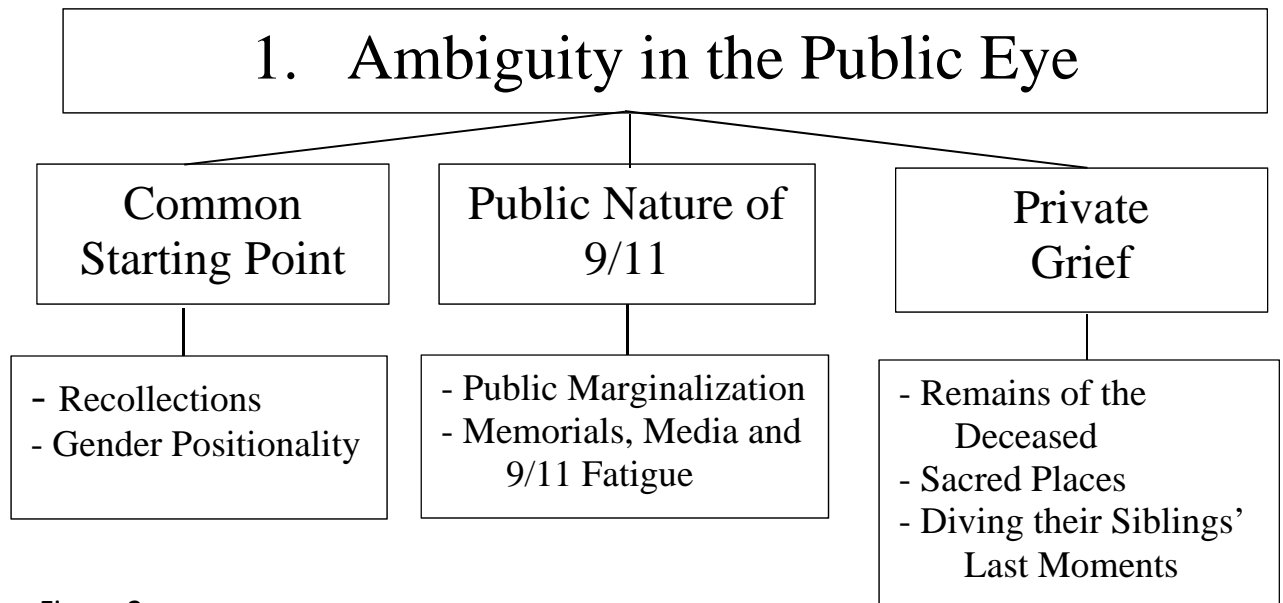


Figure 2

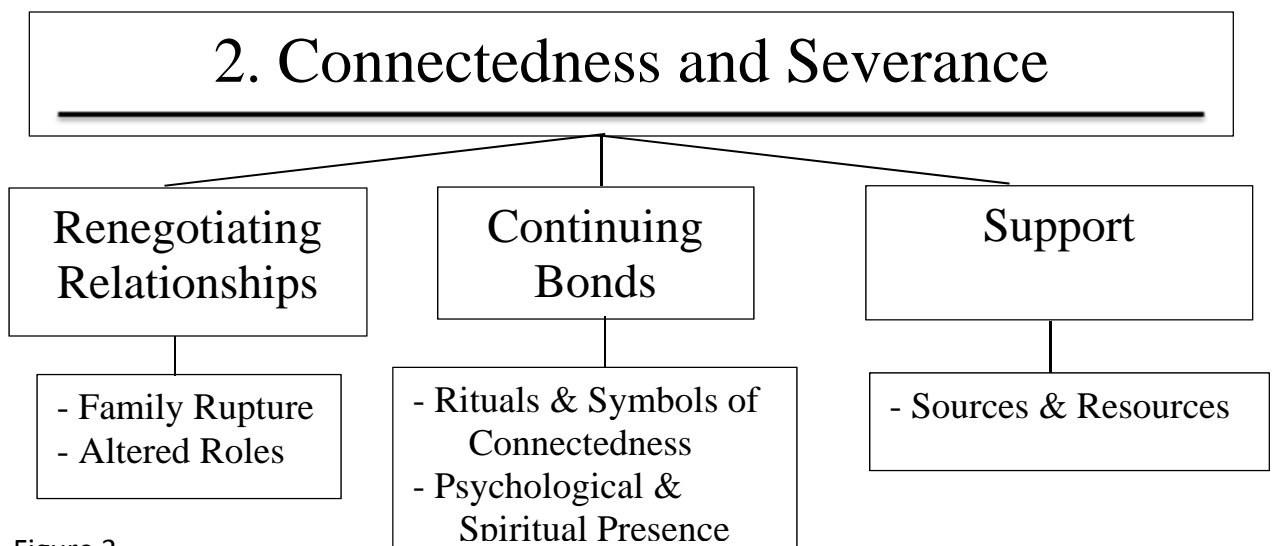


Figure 3

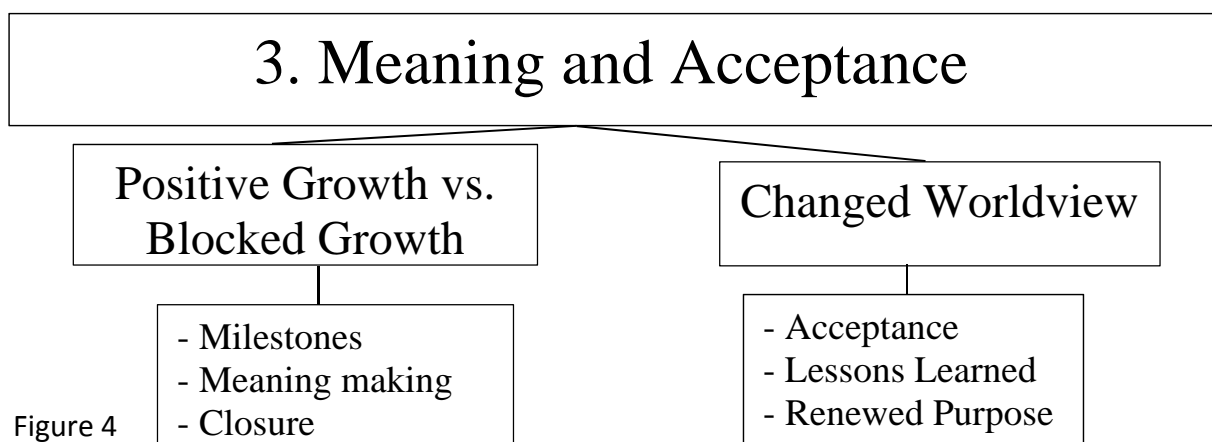


Figure 4

Theme One: Ambiguity in the Public Eye

Boss (1992) defines ambiguous loss as not knowing if a loved one is present or not and states “the ‘lost’ person may be ... physically absent and psychologically present” (p. 1). The ambiguous nature of the 9/11 loss in such horrific circumstances with the ensuing celebrity status and media frenzy and publicity around those deaths combine to present a unique set of circumstances to the grief process.

Ambiguous loss takes a central position in how we can view the nature of 9/11 grief, the grief process as it unfolded and the striving for meaning-making within the context of the stories and the process of the narratives. The grief journey I’ve explored with these participants stands within the context of 9/11 as an immersion into a prolonged, ambiguous and, for many, unresolved bereavement. The fact that there were no remains for five participants and, perhaps even more disturbing, partial remains (a bone fragment and other acknowledgements of partiality left without description) for another five created a state of ambiguity where the death of the sibling can only be acknowledged through their absence.

Through it all, there was the unrelenting media glare hoping for a story, a headline, or, even, a photo of someone crying, clutching a flag or a fire helmet, or a picture of their loved one. The public was hungry to connect with the event whether out of curiosity or empathy and the media was eager to give the public what it wanted; what it needed. The journey of the Siblings of 9/11 was punctuated by such intrusions whether welcomed or avoided. Some were on a list to be called when something of relevance to

9/11 was back in the news; things like the wrangling over the permanent memorial, the trial of the alleged masterminds or the death of Osama bin Laden.

9/11 Participants viewed ambiguity in different ways, but it was clearly one of the concepts that defined 9/11. Eight of the 11 participants addressed the concept directly. They all were quite clear on the how and when of their loss and to some extent the where and what. It was the why of it that continues to disturb others. Ambiguity means not knowing and in the case of 9/11, it means never knowing.

Common starting point.

Two impressions came to mind immediately from the very beginning of the interview process. The first were the obvious commonalities in their recollections and experiences of the events of the day, as well as of the ensuing weeks and months. In recognizing these, it became equally obvious that there were gender differences not only in the participants, but in their siblings and in the gender matching of sibling to sibling.

Recollections.

There were many commonalities in the thoughts and reactions of the participants as they recalled those first intense moments and the following weeks and months. Each participant had a story to tell and it was clear from the beginning that except for one or two who waited for an initial question after my formal introduction to the study, they each entered the room with a fairly formatted presentation of their respective journeys. The beginning was a beginning in common, one that is in common with the stories most have who remember that day. There is not much that was out of sequence or presented

differently except for the level of emotional content displayed whether that emotion be sadness, horror or anger.

One of the commonalities resounded with some variation of the statement: “it was a beautiful day.” More than half of the participants began their recollections with that statement. Perhaps, the memory of the beautiful day and the dark and ugly tragedy that soon unfolded represented a study in contrasts leaving an indelible impression. Perhaps, that observation has been made so often in articles, videos and commentaries that it has taken up residence in the preamble to the story of 9/11. The juxtaposition between light and dark is a powerful visual incongruity. By way of member checking, without revealing my perception of it, I reviewed that comment with four of the participants who said it. Each of them paused before answering and two responded with “everyone knows that.” That gave some credibility to the idea of the communal awareness. All four elaborated further to make the link between light and dark; good and bad; beautiful and horrible in each their own way. The most poignant was Ann whose religiosity tended to frame her thoughts:

“God made the world with opposites, for instance, heaven and hell, day and night, and life and death. I think he gave us a beautiful day so we know nothing is guaranteed and we don’t take stuff for granted.”

Nora was less sure, but recognized the dichotomy as she struggled to articulate her thoughts and tied them to her brother:

“You know, I’m glad the day started that way. It makes it stand out. It makes it special, you know. I like remembering it that way because that’s the way I remember my brother: sunny, just good to be with.”

Another commonly used word was “surreal” that was expressed amid a collection of other terms like confusion, disbelief, numb, out of body, fog and stupor. These were not unique to the Siblings of 9/11, but resounded as people cycled through the list of words in an attempt to capture the emotions of the moment.

Lastly and most profoundly, the word “terrorism” entered the vernacular of ordinary life. This was a word that had special meaning to the Siblings of 9/11 as they grappled with the enormity of an event that had no meaning. Their recollections of the horrors and recycling emotions of the day may not have been fundamentally different from the population at large, specifically those in proximity to the targets, but ultimately, to the Siblings of 9/11, it became a bigger, more poignant story.

The attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 was characterized by President Roosevelt as “A date that will live in infamy” (<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/day-of-infamy/>). Based on the stories of these 11 participants, as well as the collective recollections of most Americans, we can apply that brand to September 11, 2001 otherwise known as 9/11. Three participants compared it that way. For those who lost family, friends and colleagues, notoriety is a very small part of the story, but present nonetheless. The participants are individuals who created and maintained a strong attachment to their sibling that began at different points in their different lives, some early and some later. The attachment manifested in many different ways across all the participants. They characterized it as friend, companion, caregiver, responsibility, inspiration, confidant, sharer of memories, connection to the past and dream of the future. The very fact that these individuals have opted to be part of

this study speaks to their need to keep that memory alive in whatever manner that opportunity presents itself. That same fact made it apparent that dreams had been dashed and each was struggling to adapt to the concept of a “new normal,” a term that was repeated with a sense of ownership in several narratives.

It was immediately apparent that the recollections of that further ‘day of infamy’ were clear and concise. When so much was lost in such a small slice of time, the participants absorbed every moment into their conscious minds in an effort to hold on to whatever they had. Making sense of it would have to come later if at all, but, in the moment, the sudden and traumatic severing of ties to their siblings froze time in a way that each could look back and see a clear linear perspective even after 11 years. Devastation and annihilation in those moments notwithstanding, the ongoing life experience has become a progression that will persist through the course of the lives of those who make such an intensely personal connection. One of the forms that progression has necessarily taken is the grief process, a process of much interest and much study in that death has come to be regarded as a part of life rather than the antithesis to it. Siblings of 9/11 recognize that concept, but have not always been ready to accept it. There continues to be resistance to it for some and that resistance may never end – nor should it have to.

Their recollections were not just about the external happenings around them though those are still in sharp focus. As they moved through their remembrances defining the nature of the pre-9/11 connections they made with their brothers and sisters along the way, it was important for them to give voice to their memories and reactions. In doing so,

the framework of their individual and collective journeys was in place and open for examination. Nearly all of the participants have moved beyond that day in a one-step forward, often two-steps backwards pattern in the early weeks and months and, in some cases, in the early years. There can be no standardized and expected time frame through which bereaved will pass in a linear fashion. By the time they have reached the eleventh year and worked through the retelling of their respective stories to me, that pattern is reversed for some. For most, there are no backward steps at all, but a slow, sometimes painful advance to a new understanding of the fragility of life that petitions an appreciation for it. Like the day they characterize as both a “beautiful day” and “surreal,” they now embrace the adopted concept of a “new normal.”

The original respondents to this study were overwhelmingly females who have lost brothers (six) with smaller samples of sisters who lost sisters (two) and of brothers who lost brothers (three). That fact that these people responded at all is indicative of a strong and enduring relationship. The sudden and violent severing of such a relationship established a need to tell their respective stories in an attempt to make sense of what seemed senseless. It was no surprise to me that females may be more willing to give voice to their feelings and the emotional response their loss elicited. That these women mourned the loss of their brothers gives us the broad implication that the sister-brother tie where the sister is the survivor coupled with their increased penchant for emotional disclosure created a participant pool the demographics of which can be somewhat predictable. The initial response set contained 25 females of whom 23 lost a brother.

Within the framework of siblings, both the two sisters who lost sisters and the three brothers who lost brothers were willing to talk about their journey, but it seemed less urgent. I say it that way because of the six sisters who lost a brother, five expressed a clear and present need to be part of the study. They, in fact, pursued me and expressed gratitude in the end. Nora exemplified that view:

“Well it’s always emotional obviously, but getting to share him with you, another person who normally wouldn’t know him or know how much he was loved, it’s worth it. It’s worth the emotions because he deserved that.”

It is important to note that in each of these cases, their brother was younger with a range of 11 months to 8 years. The sixth sister was less engaged in the interview process and represents an outlier in that particular demographic. For her, my interview guide was an active tool.

The two sisters who lost a sister were the most resilient of the females. One’s resilience was the product of reaching a point of resolution that seemed to come of a willful decision to abandon the grief process based on impatience with it. She came armed with a shopping bag full of photographs and reveled in punctuating her timeline with appropriate images. There were difficult parts of her narrative, but of all the participants, she exemplified a future orientation in the end. The other saw her journey as one of self-exploration and change from the very beginning. It was Ann’s strong faith that gave her license to accept her loss with greater intentionality and assurance:

“And I remember, it was 4 o’clock on 9/11 and I was just looking up and just saying to God where is my sister? And He answered me and He said, ‘I have her here with Me.’ I mean I was like okay.”

Being sisters of sisters made them demographic outliers, and their respective outcomes put them on a different trajectory than the other females.

Of the brothers who lost brothers, the first to be interviewed displayed anger at the government, at the lack of information and at his inability to get answers, the “why” of his brother’s death. I wondered if he would set the tone for all succeeding males.

“My brother was murdered in ways that are hard to accept. There’s no body. There’s no rhyme or reason. I don’t get it. I didn’t get due process of law as to face the accusers. My wanting to know why, why we were vulnerable, why there was no accountability, why can’t I have answers, that’s what I want.”

He did not set such a tone. The other two were stoic and characterized themselves as task-oriented and engaged in the study because it was “interesting,” a term they both used regularly to modify their appreciation of different points along the way.

The public nature of 9/11.

The events of September 11, 2001 and everything relative and relevant to them since then can be seen as central to public policy, public safety and public interest on many levels. These elements have been significant in the lived experience of my participants. Each has told of instances where they have been called upon to not only report the state of their grief, but to actually grieve with the eyes of the world upon them. It occurred nationally in the beginning when family memorials were publicized and dignitaries were often in attendance.

Loraine:

“Mayor Giuliani came to my brother’s memorial and spoke. There was a sea of uniforms in the parking lot and in

the church. I sat in the front row with my family and wanted to shrink down. I could feel everyone's eyes on us. We were like the entertainment committee."

Rose:

"When we came in for my brother's memorial, there were cameras clicking everywhere. I thought, 'who are these people?'"

It has occurred locally when neighbors and friends recognized the loss. At times, it was welcome. In times of grief, there is often a groundswell of support. People bring food, flowers, and cards. They visit and offer words of support, but slowly that groundswell gives way to life as usual and the recognition becomes curiosity. The Siblings of 9/11 were well aware of the size of the overall effect, but for the most part, saw it as private and wondered what part was reserved just for them.

Lisa:

"It was awful. Everybody thought it was a big thing. For me, it was personal."

Public marginalization.

In the analysis of where Siblings of 9/11 stood on the continuum of those who experienced a loss, they recognize that disclosing their loss often led to the question, "Did he/she have family?" For most, this was viewed as decidedly indifferent, as a thoughtless attempt at compassion without empathic understanding. The participants reported a second tier status as grief responses from others apply to siblings.

Ben:

"Yeah and I felt marginalized. I felt, you know, like the siblings were forgotten, the forgotten ones. It was always about the children. How're the children doing? How're your parents doing? This is my brother. I grew up with him. Thirty-six years."

The common complaint of apathetic compassion coming from certain individuals was present at many points through the journeys of the Siblings of 9/11. As a sibling, as a sister or brother, they felt the focus was always on the spouse, the children and, lastly, the parents. Most were grateful that their parents were considered to some degree, but the hierarchy pained them especially where there were spouses of only a few years. They report that the immediate interest was always for the wife and kids. Several participants stated that they didn't understand why so many people felt compelled to get that information immediately. Some were more prosaic about it.

Nora:

“Well, listen, 11 years down the road I survived this crap and certainly I've grown.”

For the most part, the Siblings of 9/11 knew that people just didn't know what to say to them and several suggested that whatever people say, it would probably be wrong anyway.

Counter to the notion of public disenfranchisement came stories of consideration and respect. That impression came in the form of extra courtesies extended by those who came in random contact with the Siblings of 9/11. One participant found himself stranded at a conference halfway across the country. Planes were grounded by the FAA. He drove across the country to get home finding people going out of their way to offer support and help. The public eye, then, perceived Siblings of 9/11 differently when viewed outside the context of their family. Individually, people in general identified with them and whether in sympathy or empathy, extended themselves in an effort to help in whatever way they could. However, when viewed within the context of their families, siblings were

told to be strong for the spouse, children and parents of the victim. They felt the personal need, as well as the societal imposition to be there for mom and dad, to subjugate their own grief and become caregivers to those from whom they would normally expect relief. Parents are thought to be there to pick up their children when they fall down, but these parents lost a child and were unavailable. As a result, the Siblings of 9/11 experience disenfranchisement in the form of separation anxiety from their original, archetypical attachment figures.

Memorials, media and 9/11 fatigue.

In the initial period after the attacks, the ambiguous circumstances, the suddenness of the losses, the absence of remains and lack of dependable information prompted the recognition for the need for a helping response, but there was no precedent for something of this impact and scope. The participants recall this as a time of confusion, uncertainty and anxiety, yet with a lingering sense of hope. As rescue morphed into recovery, hope died and memorials were being organized on several levels. Of the six participants who recovered partial remains, the first of those wasn't recovered until December 31, 2001. All participants' families mounted efforts to memorialize their loved ones without a casket, a body or any tangible proof that a death occurred save for the smoldering ruins of the World Trade Center, the face of the Pentagon and the wreckage of Flight 93 in Pennsylvania. For the participants of my study, the death of their siblings occurred in lower Manhattan. In October, Mayor Giuliani invited the families of victims to a public memorial service within sight of the fallen towers. Six participants attended with their families. Dignitaries spoke, an ensemble performed and Andrea Bocelli sang. One

participant was so moving in his recollection of that day that I feel compelled to display it herewith:

“We stood in what would have been the shadow of the Twin Towers. Where those towers once stood was sky, but the sky was filled with smoke. The air was tortured and the acrid stench assaulted our nostrils. In other times, I would have been so happy to see and hear Bocelli, but not that day. I was numb that day. People held up pictures of their lost loved ones. It seemed like they were saying, “Here is your likeness in the place you once walked, but where are you?” We yearned to catch some glimpse of the souls that now took up residence among the ruins. There was nothing to see except smoke and destruction. Strange, I don’t remember the media being there. From that day on, I remember them everywhere I went.”

That sentiment echoed among all the participants. Memorials were arranged at the national, state, county and town and family levels. Families of 9/11 were put on display. The public hungered for the stories and some family members were eager to satisfy that hunger. Of my participants, two of the males seemed to act in a professional capacity. One was in public relations and the other was in the defense industry. Both had a relaxed though task-oriented manner in their dealing with the press and both became prominent on the media’s list of people to call whenever something newsworthy occurred within the context of 9/11 right up to the death of Osama bin Laden ten years later. The third male imposed himself on the media with letters to the editor, op-ed pieces and a blog, each to express his dismay and anger over the dearth of information and accountability.

The media frenzy and public exposure in the early days and the attempt of the media to extract as much emotional content as possible was embraced by some, avoided by some and left others stunned and speechless. That same media attention in terms of

replaying the horror of falling buildings, billowing smoke and running people was a scene to which some were drawn and from which others recoiled. Included in the ongoing public nature of 9/11 was and continues to be the intense coverage of the yearly commemorations of the victims at so-called Ground Zero, as well as a plethora of county, city and private memorials scattered locally, nationally and, even, internationally. The impact of the public nature and exposure was immeasurable and especially scalding for those who chose to keep it within the confines of a personal loss.

Several of the participants recognize the concept of “9/11 fatigue.” By that, they mean a weariness of all things 9/11 felt in general reaction to the memorials and ongoing media coverage. It has been felt in conjunction with other feelings of disenfranchisement as in “isn’t it time you’ve moved on?” or “When will they stop reading the names?” They most often feel that weariness outside the community of 9/11 families. They felt that sense of calling for an ending around the time of the 10th anniversary of 9/11. The Siblings of 9/11 asked, “Am I supposed to be okay now. Ten years have passed and the eleventh is supposed to be okay?” Loraine put it succinctly when she said:

“I do not ask anyone to join me. Do what you have to do. I won’t judge you. I will do what I have to do and I ask that you don’t judge me.”

While the public at large remembers the anniversary of the attacks, the participants vary in how they view that day. They all move beyond the date, per se, and remember birthdays and significant holidays in their own ways. Five of the eleven participants continue to observe the yearly “official” commemorations and not for the same reasons. For two it’s a matter of ownership, for two others it’s about respect for all

the victims and for another, it's about public service. Of the remaining six, four choose to remember their sibling with some personal and private connection and two have chosen to remain very low key, perhaps, light a candle and nothing more.

Private grief.

Behind the swirl of media attention and grief in public places, there were the private times when the participants, each in his or her own way, sought to reconcile themselves with the challenging and immutable givens of 9/11.

Remains of the deceased.

One of the more tragic aspects of the event was the fact that nearly 1,000 families had no remains or perhaps, to greater dismay, had partial remains. Only Nora claimed her brother in full. She said she feels like one of the lucky ones. She is thankful that they are not one of the families who have nothing.

Five others had remains to bury, but hesitated in describing the nature. The body language during this part of the narrative indicated great discomfort; the head turned down and away as though they were looking away from a tangible source of their pain. For three of the five, the call from the Medical Examiner's office or the visit by a state trooper and a priest happened more than once. This represented a departure from the normally expected traditional funeral, the purpose of which helps mark a definitive point of transition in the grief process. There was no such point of transition for these few. Transition at this point was denied and they barely tolerated a provisional standstill to their progress such as it was. Lisa characterized it as a repetitive recycling through the same nightmare of getting what she longed for and hating what it was and, then, enduring

the heartbreak of getting more. She tremulously waited for the next phone call or knock on the door. The ambiguity here is in the question that was asked several times: “Will they find more of him?”

Others found themselves stuck in place, unable to feel a semblance of anything conclusive. Jack related his family’s dilemma that was out of the public eye and very unique to their Jewishness. As a public relations professional, he says he is used to finding solutions where none seems apparent. He did not know he would have remains in six months and was unsure of the protocol for sitting Shiva with no body. After researching the subject and consulting with his rabbi uncle, he found a precedent set during the holocaust. Not only did this help Jack resolve an untenable situation, but it comforted him to know that this experience had a historical precedent in the tradition of his faith. His story gave notice to the many ways the 9/11 grief process called for a creativity to overcome the exigencies distinctive to it.

Rose remained by her mother’s side though there were things she would rather have not participated in. They identified a small piece of bone belonging to her brother. There was a funeral with the bone. Rose sobbed inconsolably as she told this part of her story.

“It was Mother’s Day 2002. My mom’s Mother’s Day present, that’s what it was. To watch my mom holding this bone and that’s her son. That’s all she had of him. People don’t hear about that side. You know, that’s the part about being a sibling and like seeing your parents go through that.”

The issue of remains, no remains, partial remains and, even, continuous remains defined the beginning of the grief process. It was a milestone in the journey of those, like

Nora, who felt themselves lucky in the scheme of things. There are five participants for whom there was nothing and for them it was the essence of ambiguity. The ambiguity voiced itself in such statements as “My brother didn’t go on his terms. I don’t know where he was. I don’t know how he suffered” or “Is he alive or is he dead?” or “I was floating...like an appendage was cut off suddenly and I don’t know why.”

Sacred places.

Finding remains or not among the ashes of the World Trade Center, the wreckage of the planes or in the ring of the Pentagon was a function of the evolution from rescue to recovery. To some degree, the recovery efforts continue to this day. Some participants are still waiting for a call from the Medical Examiner’s office. As this point 11 years into the grief process, it has become the dreaded call, one that will offer little resolution for the Siblings of 9/11 and may open new wounds. They each in their own way, have come to a decision as to the place that holds the most meaning, the place to grieve, the place to make a lasting connection. Even for those who have remains and a grave, 9/11 as a construct unto itself has fostered a new set of self-defined rules with which to navigate the grief process.

For many of the Families of 9/11, Ground Zero represents sacred ground; the last place their loved ones walked and breathed on this earth; where what is left of their siblings may still be. It is celebrated in New York City, the country and to some extent, the world. Ted wonders about Ground Zero:

“Is he really there? They hauled away a lot of stuff. He’s probably in a landfill.”

For the few who view that site as the final resting place of their sibling, as sacred ground, there is a sense of ownership. They are clear about the place that holds the most meaning and the only place that is worthy of their grief. They see it as the last place their sibling walked and stood. The way they speak of it displays an incongruity where their grief is oddly heightened and lessened at the same time by their attendance at Ground Zero. One exclaimed, "I'm fierce about it." Fierce is a new concept for the Siblings of 9/11, but one that can be seen through their uncompromising pursuit of meaning and resolution, neither of which is guaranteed despite the effort. I believe the Siblings of 9/11 are fully aware of that, but don't care. In many ways, it's the pursuit that matters. In many ways, that's where they may find meaning.

Rose's brother's bone is buried in Massachusetts. Nora has a traditional grave to visit. She knows her brother's body is there. Lena can visit an urn in a niche, but knows there is more of her brother at the Medical Examiner's office. Casey and Jack, each also have a gravesite. None of the above find that a place of comfort or finality. It holds no connection for any of them, nor does Ground Zero. Instead they talk about the beach, a tree with a plaque in front of their high school, an old boat under a flagpole or a shrine of pictures, mementos and a candle in the living room. These places are personal and have personal meaning. They attempt to represent that meaning in terms of a sense of a residual spirit of their lost sibling that imparts a lasting value to these places. It may have been the last place they were with their sibling, the more meaningful space they shared as they developed and grew closer or the object that was most cherished. In many ways,

these places and objects represent a means of maintaining proximity to their dead sibling. This concept will be further explored under the heading of “continuous bonds.”

Only two were equivocal about a place to grieve and about grieving at all, for that matter. One talked about memorials and special places from a somewhat removed position. She said they lack what she needs, but was less than coherent about what that need is. In an effort to get her to elaborate, it came down to not needing a place at all. That part of the interview made her uneasy. She mentioned Ground Zero as “nice,” but was vague about what mattered. At times, she sounded like a tourist.

The second made it perfectly clear that she was beyond that, beyond the depression that held her down for years and beyond the need to go over and over her sibling’s death. She was adamant and vehement in her refusal to grieve anymore. She would rather celebrate her sister’s birthday and remember fun things. Yet, by the time she finished this passage, she was angry. It became clear that she was thinking of a friend from group who continues to visit memorials on 9/11. She said:

“I see she gets very, very upset. I won’t do that and I say,
‘You know, I respect you and you gotta respect me.’”

That is an important message, the idea of Siblings of 9/11 respecting each other. It’s been nothing short of just that.

Divining their siblings’ last moments.

Whether there were full remains, partial remains or no remains, consistent with each of those possibilities is the fact that the last moments of those trapped in the buildings or helpless as their planes became missiles is unknown to the world. There is some knowledge of actions taken on Flight 93 before the passengers denied the hijackers

their intended target and the plane plummeted, but we don't know who was alive, who perished in the attempt or what it was like to be there in that moment.

There are reports of frantic 911 calls from the World Trade Center as the intense heat of the jet fuel drove survivors of the impact to do improbable things like jumping to certain death, but we don't know what it was like to make such a decision or even if there was a choice to be made. We do know that some survived the initial impact, but we don't know who died in the moment and who lingered in those horrific last moments as the buildings shuddered in its death throes.

The essence of ambiguity is simply a matter of not knowing. For a few, ambiguity was a matter of simply saying just that. Ann shrugged as she said, "I really don't know what happened to her in the end." Jack was as prosaic as ever: "You know there's all this stuff related to his death that will never be answered." Nearly all of the participants went through their own stylized litany of questions related to their siblings' last moments. Eleven years later that continues to haunt them and their tone and body-language as they mused about the obscurity surrounding those last moments seems disposed them to imagine worst case scenarios. Some said they wished they knew and stopped in midsentence. Exploring further with them, they all came to the conclusion that their imaginings could possibly be infinitely worse than reality. Some changed their minds again thinking probably not.

A couple of the Siblings of 9/11 were prompted to reflect beyond to what could have been the case. Some had access to tapes with noise, shouting and confusion. One spoke of the cockpit tape from Flight 175 before it crashed into the South Tower. She had

learned the plane was going up and down making that kind of motion with her hand, up and down, and that the passengers were all getting sick on the plane. But when it came to her brother, she is more specific.

Rose:

“I haven’t really said this out loud. I actually think he was killed before because I know there was a passenger killed. I know he would stand up and not let it happen.”

It was meaningful for her to say her brother died a hero’s death. I don’t think she recognized she was making meaning in that moment, but, nonetheless, she seemed satisfied with what she had said. I witnessed meaning-making in another way when Ann said:

“I have nothing of her as a dead person. To me, the idea of them just finding bones of her just, like, kind of nauseates me. The last thing I have of her was her being alive and her soul is safe.”

This statement exemplifies the power of her faith. In the times immediately after 9/11, there was a great outpouring of faith and return to religion (Shaw, Joseph & Linley, 2005).

I member checked with five participants, two of whom were the more definitive of the group in terms of what they imagined could have happened and three of whom were more tentative. The former launched into a vigorous reenactment as though they had given more thought to their original narrative in the interim. There was less of what could have happened and more of what probably did happen. The probabilities were fashioned around an enhanced reactionary stance of their siblings and they appeared to enjoy the retelling. Of the latter three, one, Lena, demurred. She was straightforward in

her rejection stating flatly, “I don’t want to think about it.” The remaining two matched the former two in their ardor. Nora’s brother was a firefighter whose full remains were found. She began a graphic description of the condition of his turn out coat and what evidence of his last moments could be gleaned from that. Apparently, she had spoken with other firefighters since the interview. Her first rendition sparked her interest and she pursued further possibilities with those who she felt surely knew the answers.

Summary of Ambiguity in the Public Eye

The Siblings of 9/11 felt like their lives became part of the public record on September 11th, 2001. That day was in the public eye and they were caught up in the historical sweep that started when Flight 11 crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. They didn’t know it at the time. They know it now. Prior to that, life was normal. Life was private. As the events of the day unfolded, participants cycled through confusion, fear, anxiety and hope in an unending rotation. That cycle continued through the following days, weeks and months with the added element of grief. They all experienced it. They all reported the same unending sequence of emotional upheaval varying only in the order and the intensity. The gender mix had some impact on that process though the sample was too small to be definitive. Yet, it seemed apparent that the gender mix, not only in terms of participants themselves, but, more pointedly, in terms of survivor to victim indicated interesting and observable patterns.

The Siblings of 9/11 experienced the sympathy and concern of others on an individual basis, but felt dismissed in the public space within the context of their families. The media glare did not allow for private grief and the social order imposed a mandate to

be strong for and sensitive to the needs of those who were deemed to have suffered a greater loss. Memorials seemed ubiquitous and were in direct response to the magnitude and the ambiguity of the loss, i.e. massive devastation, no immediate remains and overwhelming public grief. As with all grief, the groundswell of support eventually diminished and the bereaved were expected to return to some semblance of normalcy. Normalcy cannot exist when all points of reference are forfeited.

The Siblings of 9/11 have been removed from the standard grief rituals of wakes, funerals and burials. For many, there is no final resting place. Those places judged sacred are personal constructs centering around selective, intimate remembrances and meaningful tributes. The ambiguity does not start with the death of their siblings, but rather, in the final moments before those deaths. The Siblings of 9/11 shudder to imagine what their siblings' final moments could have been like. There are no answers. In the end, the only antidote to ambiguity is cultivating a tolerance for it.

Theme Two: Connectedness and Severance

Renegotiating Relationships

The participants' narratives frequently returned to the subject of changing relationships whether they be with their parent(s) who lost a child, with their other siblings who may have moved through the grief process in a different way, with their dead siblings' spouses and children who were the main target of support efforts, with friends, relatives, co-workers and those who offered condolences and, lastly, with the more widely recognized construct of Families of 9/11.

Family rupture.

Where there was a spouse and children, because of legal conventions, that spouse became the official point of contact (POC). Where the relationship was strong and remained strong, siblings were embraced within the overall family and there was a sharing of grief. Where there was less of a bond and/or where amplified stressors took their toll and caused that bond to deteriorate, Siblings of 9/11 found themselves disenfranchised from the grief process, marginalized in acknowledgement of their loss and feeling dismissed as someone whose grief was somehow less. Whether the marriage was of long duration or not was of no consequence to authorities, but it was of great consequence to family of origin, particularly to the Siblings. They had lost loved ones with whom they shared their lives from the first moment of awareness. They had fully expected to share that life to its farthest reaches.

Three participants observed that the circumstances of their loss and their family dynamics precluded feeling disenfranchised when it came to getting information and being included in the arrangements and grief sharing when it came to their sibling. One was folded into her brother's family and maintained a strong connection and friendship with her sister-in-law. Part of that may have been her mild mannered approach and unwillingness, inability or natural disinclination to make demands of any sort. That coupled with the fact that she claimed her brother had a paternal attitude towards her because she is the unmarried sister left his family predisposed to accept her on any terms. She, for her part, just made it easier by her extremely non-confrontational stance. Expectations seem to have played a big role in securing franchise with the POC. Those

who may have moved beyond a tenacious focus on the loss may have had a better awareness and appreciation for what was not lost.

The real impact of family rupture hit hardest in five cases, nearly half of the participants. In four of them, there was sister-in-law where the relationship was good while their brother was alive, but deteriorated over the course of the grief process and in one of the cases, Ben, a brother who lost a brother, that relationship was never good to begin with and he freely admitted it. Loraine made a slightly different point.

Loraine:

“I guess I came to the realization that a spouse comes first, above and beyond blood relatives and I didn’t like being given the information in her good time. I wanted to know it, I wanted to know it now and I wanted to be one of the first to know. Being married I would want to be the first on to know, but in those days, I just think everyone wanted to know at the same time. There was no sharing of anything: grief, feelings, sorrow, crying.”

Loraine felt marginalized in more ways than one. It wasn’t just about the information though that was an important part. It was about the fact that she felt alone in her grief. Loraine makes a strong point in saying that while her sister-in-law with her children, their grief was more, Loraine’s grief was not less.

Loraine continues to make an effort to keep the peace. Her crying, like Rose’s, has been deemed too much and it was noted on several occasions. However, information is neither timely enough nor complete enough in Loraine’s eyes. Loraine, Rose, Lisa, Mary and Ben see the connections to their brothers as a continuing birthright severed by bureaucracy and legal convention. Such feelings may have been augmented by other perceptions of neglect.

Ben brings up the matter of payment, the ability of money to facilitate moving on. Ben understands the implication of moving on as an act of leaving something behind. His sister-in-law like Lisa's, Rose's, Mary's and Loraine's had found new life partners and moved and, in the eyes of the Siblings of 9/11, have left behind their old lives and old connections. They have reinvented themselves, Ben says. Do they have that right? Of course, all the Siblings say, but the pain still persists. The lost dream still haunts them. Ben's sister-in-law remarried and has had three more children with her new husband plus Karl's two. They don't know their dad. This is a pain that all the Siblings of 9/11 feel. Their nieces and nephews don't know who their fathers were and the siblings don't always have the power to tell them the stories of their dads.

The brothers of two participants were each unmarried. The point of contact automatically fell to the parents who, in at least one case, deferred back to the surviving sibling. Where it did not, the mother was extremely proactive in the 9/11 community and took the reins of all aspects regarding her son. Her daughter was comfortable in her position as adjunct to her mother's leadership. This was the normal family dynamic without in-laws to accede to and no feelings of disenfranchisement in that regard. However, they disclosed having heard "horror stories," a term they both used, of in-laws withholding information, as well as grandchildren, creating secondary trauma for the families of origin.

Several participants recalled how they had been excluded from an active part in the memorials of their siblings for a variety of reason from fear they would cry too much to a

perceived sense of competition as to whose approach would better eulogize the lost life.

One case in particular a sibling stood her ground and made her point.

Rose:

“Okay, let me just make something really clear here, I think out of all of us I was probably the closest to him. I am writing the eulogy. And they said, ‘Well...’ I said, No, no, I am. I’m just telling you right now, that’s what I’m doing, and they said, ‘Okay, well you’ve got 5 minutes.’ I said, ‘I’ll take as long as I need,’ and I did.”

Two of the participants were siblings between themselves, sister and brother of the same victim of 9/11. The sister, Lisa, for her part, has taken her feeling of disenfranchisement the worst. Losing the connection with her brother’s wife and family seems to have had a multiplier effect where her perception of her loss leaves her hyperventilating in her grief. Part of her feelings has to do with her parents who she feels have been disrespected to the point where their health has been affected. It’s important to note here that the other participant, her brother, Ted, refutes that argument. He struggled in his attempt to remain non-judgmental, but he indicated that his sister does not perceive the situation as it really is. It is not clear whether her grief has clouded her judgment or her resentments impaired her cognitions. What is clear is that we can dispense with an absolute reality and be aware that perceptions take center stage. It is apparent in the case of this brother and sister, but is less apparent in the other cases as there is no corroboration on the specifics of each. Lived experience means just that and Lisa’s perception is her reality. Ted’s reality includes his perception of Lisa. There can be no right or wrong.

Based on Rose's proactive stance in securing a position in her brother's memorial, I wondered how other disenfranchised siblings imagined regaining a position of equality or, even, retribution for their exclusion. I member checked with the five who had complained the most about the subjugation of their grief and the ensuing alienation. Rose, being the most proactive, was the most regretful. She felt that she pushed for her rightful place, but for that effort was punished in her ability to have a meaningful relationship with her brother's children. Nevertheless, she averred that she would probably do it again as it was the right thing to do in the moment. The result was her sister-in-law's resentment. As Rose was only 11 months older than her brother and they were always treated like twins in the same school, same class and same friends. She felt she was engaged in a competition with her sister-in-law as to who knew Peter the best. She was quite sure that would have happened in any case. Three others felt in unison that the deterioration of the relationship with the POC was doomed from the start and any proactive advances on their part would have been met with a preemptive move only worsening the situation. Lisa continued to lament her situation in the same manner as she had during the initial interview. Ben, for his part and ever the outlier, was steadfast in his opinion that this sister-in-law "had it in for me from day one." It was his intention to speak to his brother's children when they were older for the sole purpose of telling them how disappointed he was in their mother. He was not deterred by the possibility that such action would not only exacerbate an already hopeless situation, but could possibly alienate his niece and nephew from him and obviate all further contact.

Another way family rupture manifested was in marital relations. Two female participants indicated that their marriages had failed in the aftermath of 9/11. Spousal support was cited by nearly every married participant. It was an important adjunct to their own ability to withstand depression and heartache. When that support was absent or withdrawn, it signified a disconnect where there was a basic expectation.

Rose:

“I remember just sitting there one time just crying. I couldn’t help it and he would come up and say, ‘What’s wrong with you?’ What’s wrong with me? Are you kidding me, you don’t know what’s wrong with me? You of all people should know what’s wrong with me. He wanted attention from me that I couldn’t give him. I couldn’t be there for him and so he found someone that could be.”

Casey on the other hand, came to the recognition that her marriage was less than satisfactory. Her sister’s death brought her to an understanding that life is too fragile and too short to be less than intentional in how you live it.

Casey:

“He was not there. I don’t think he ever said ‘Get over it,’ but I interpreted him that way. I couldn’t stand him. He didn’t know how to be there for me. He just wanted his normal life back and his nice dinners and his wife back and the bubbly wife that he knows. I would never have questioned my marriage. Oh, he’s nice. He’s a good person. He provides, materially, beyond. Her life gave me courage to say you know what, life is short. You better go, you know, I don’t want to be on my death bed saying, you know, I stayed with a boring rich guy. I would feel so betrayed by myself.”

Altered roles.

Several participants were very clear in verbalizing their acknowledgements that there have been many times in their lives when they really needed mom and dad, that

parents are there to protect you no matter how old you are, and that parents always pick you up when you fall down. Their acknowledgement seemed to be prompted by their recognition that things were now very different. That thought stimulated a series of metaphors for how they viewed the upheaval in their lives. Metaphors such as “my world was turned upside down” and “the rug was pulled out from under us” were commonly used to give a visual and symbolic representation to their feelings. The context of 9/11 turned things around where there was a severance from proximity. In short, parents were not and could not be available, yet at least one was still alive today in most cases. The parents lost a child and were, perhaps, beyond metaphors to describe their despondency. Nevertheless, there still were living children in need of parental succor and that was provided only in one case. In two cases, the parents were either not part of the grief process at all or were no longer alive. However, in 8 of eleven cases, Siblings of 9/11 felt the need and duty to take the lead in protecting and supporting their parents whether the threat emanated from family rupture within the grief process or from the grief process alone. In lieu of what normally would be separation anxiety, Siblings of 9/11 found themselves in the role of caretaker.

Rose:

“I lost my brother, I lost my parents. I was floundering. I became their parents.”

Rose’s words were echoed in one sense or another by the majority of participants. In their grief, the Siblings of 9/11 often found their own grief on hold as they attended to the task of supporting those who society deemed as having a greater loss, i.e. spouses, children and parents. That societal imposition is generally part of social learning and, as

such, there are names for those who lose spouses (widows and widowers) and for those who lose parents (orphans), but none for those who lose children and siblings. Both parents and siblings found themselves in uncharted territory with their loss and, then, with the metaphorically represented irrationality of the situation. The prospect of putting one's grief on hold has no other outcome than prolonged, unresolved grief and that combined construct was endured within the family dynamic and by virtue of the overall ambiguity of the 9/11 experience. The grief literature concurs that in as much as there is no particular timeframe for the grief process, it is expected that the process begins at the time of a loss and goes through various stages, not necessarily in a linear fashion, but with a back and forth motion. A timeframe is dictated by the bereaved's level of resilience and recovery. The literature indicates that recovery is healthiest when backwards motion is precluded from the process and the bereaved moves forward and a slow but steady rate. The sad reality is that the parents of those participants have aged eleven years since they lost their child, but according to those eight participants the rate of parental aging has accelerated with a greater loss of purpose. Of the eight, five have lost their fathers during this time leaving one only one parent.

Six of the participants had both of their parents alive on 9/11 and, subsequently, lost one in the past 11 years. Nora was the only one who did not find herself in the position of caregiver to her parents by virtue of her mother's strong constitution and proactive stance. Her mother was still the mother of the child and those roles had not been reversed. The other five had found themselves in that altered role. They had all lost their fathers to illness early in their 11 year journey and one also lost her mother several

years later. I checked back with those five participants to understand the changing dynamic and how it affected them, their outlook and their progress through the grief process. They saw that additional loss quite apart from the loss of their sibling. It was touching how they saw their parents' deaths as part of the normal fabric of life. It was only when they compared that secondary loss to the ambiguity of the first that a positive aspect of the ambiguity came into their conscious minds. Their fathers died of illnesses in a slow decline. They watched human dignity evaporate as their fathers' illnesses took a toll. They remembered their siblings as live and vibrant individuals, living life to its fullest. The things they missed the most about their fathers was obscured by the vision of the final days. They didn't have that with their siblings and in contrast to the parents' deaths, they took pause. They seemed surprised that ambiguity could have a positive aspect, as did I. Nevertheless, they expressed that their parents' deaths brought into focus a "natural order of things," a posture of "how things are supposed to happen."

Jack:

"You know, my father's death was a natural consequence of being alive. His life would have been full if he didn't lose a son, my brother. I knew what I had to do when my father died – not so when my brother died."

Loraine:

"My father already had Alzheimer's when my brother died. He didn't know what happened. When it was his turn, I stood by his bed and said, 'Tim will be waiting for you in heaven.' He looked at me. For the first time in years, he seemed to hear me and then, he closed his eyes."

Jack and Loraine found comfort when their fathers died. They and two others were able to perform their respective duties as a child of the parent. Once again, the outlier was Ben. His response was from the viewpoint of being "cheated" by his brother's

death and the lack of justice. His father, too, had been “robbed” of a son and had no resolution. Ben’s version of justice was in the form of information and accountability. Member checking with him gave him the opportunity to make the same claims on his father’s behalf.

Reports of being part of a “club I didn’t want to join” became especially poignant as Siblings of 9/11 found themselves as a link to 9/11 for those who had no loss and no other connection. All the participants related stories of interacting with strangers, especially those who would offer condolences – apart from perceptions of apathetic compassion - left participants feeling a sort of celebrity status that endowed others with a the unique distinction of knowing someone who lost someone on 9/11. Nearly all the participants were familiar with this and recognized it as a real occurrence. In the beginning months and early years, they were taken somewhat aback by it, but came to understand that it was a predictable incidence in their current landscape. The participants’ reactions and perceptions about it were split fairly down the middle. No one was indifferent to it. Some disliked it, “hated it” by a couple because they saw it as an “insufferable imposition.” It “showed how people could be so insensitive” and most acutely, it put the focus on them. A few took it in stride thinking they owed it to people to express the feelings even if it was to someone they didn’t know. Yet, several welcomed it because they saw it as an opportunity to tell their sibling’s story. That was noted as important to all the participants though there was a sharp discrepancy as to how they viewed the appropriate forum.

Continuing Bonds

Continuing bonds (CB) refers to a concept that emphasizes the need for the bereaved to seek new and sustain old bonds with the deceased in terms of memories, metaphors and interactions for healthy grief resolution. The purpose is to maintain an ongoing attachment and, in some way, to consider the deceased as continuing the life journey with the bereaved. It recognizes that severing bonds is not necessarily conducive to that resolution.

Throughout the 11 year journey, Siblings of 9/11 strove to maintain some sort of psychological presence of their deceased sibling. That presence manifested itself in a variety of ways from the mundane to the enigmatic. Initially, I had expectations about the level and nature of such continuing bonds. I found that while there were certain common motifs that seemed shared, participant styles and perceptions of what is important varied widely. In my discussion of sacred places, I struggled to parse out how those important places that were chosen may constitute a continuing bond. I finally recognized that for purposes of this study and my definition of what continuing bonds can be, but, more importantly, for the purposes of the Siblings of 9/11, the notion of continuing bonds was a more fluid concept. It does comprise that perceived sacred place in as far that place provides the means by which the participants can feel a sense of closeness to their deceased sibling.

Rituals and symbols of connectedness.

Upon further examination, the sense of continuance takes the form of memories of special times or a suitable replacement for the traditional resting place. There were

other more present manifestations of connection that participants described. While wearing bracelets with a name or a locket with a picture or getting a tattoo with such images as a religious icon, a name, a firefighter's badge, an angel or poignant words while different in their own ways and holding meaning in their own ways, they seemed to be a common outward exhibition of another metaphor in which several participants categorized their grief, "wearing my heart on my sleeve."

Nora:

"I guess I had this thing about tattoos about sending the wrong message and I always in the back of my head thought well I don't need to do that to honor him, I can just honor him in a million other different ways. I guess I also don't find as much of the stigma as used to be with tattoos. I just put his name. I just wrote 'Greg' and a little shamrock and I wrote 'baby brother'. I will never regret that."

Other commonalities included private memorials of varying degrees ranging from a photo with a candle to shrines of an outsized magnitude in one's home. For many, it is touching their siblings' names etched in granite at memorials. That tactile sensation created a physical connection to something concrete in a world where their siblings' presences had become an abstract in the forms of spirits, memories, images, and spectral apparitions.

Psychological and spiritual presence.

However, there were personal and spiritual appearances of connection that demonstrated the continuance of the sibling bond that was very real and present for the participants. It was touching to hear most participants reflect on how they had taken care of their deceased sibling in so many ways during his or her lifetime and now have not

only the expectation, but the conviction that the roles are reversed now. Their deceased sibling is watching over them and their families. They feel safe and secure in that belief.

I interpreted their attempts to make contact as a need for Proximity Maintenance in the form of availability of an attachment figure, one that was now elusive and on a different plane. The various methods in which the participants succeeded in experiencing their siblings' presence were consistent on a conceptual level, i.e. they each felt that presence emanates in a specific way that had meaning and great satisfaction, but were quite different on a quantifiable and manifest level. Some may be due to a higher level of awareness to those things that the deceased sibling found important in life. Some are thought to be eccentricities. Most cannot be explained in a logical way.

One participant likes to sew, but considers herself terrible at cutting. Now, she feels her brother's hand guiding hers as she cuts fabric. She maintains that she feels the warmth of his hand on hers. That's her continuing bond as she sews daily.

Another believes spirits have access to the physical world through electronic devices. She declares that her brother makes himself known by clicking on such items as the TV or her printer. She also is quite sure she hears his voice clearly on the wind at the beach, her sacred place.

A brother recognizes his brother's presence in his brother's favorite songs or groups that he hears regularly. He told of many instances where he was looking for certain missing belongings of his brother's and, then, finding them due to another circumstance. The day after he was looking for his brother's college diploma, a flood in his basement prompted him to move boxes only to find the diploma behind them.

A sister reported seeing multiple rainbows every time she sees something he would especially appreciate and tells him about it. Most recently, she visited an art gallery to see paintings she knew he would love and turned to see multiple rainbows out the window.

A sister tells of having no remains of her brother and because of family rupture has lost contact with her sister-in law and her brother's children. She stated that she was even denied a shirt of his. She claims she prayed fervently for something of his and the next day, six months after 9/11, his driver's license arrived in a plain envelope with no note. It was in very good shape. She said it appeared only slightly weathered like it had been exposed to the elements. A few days after that, an abandoned puppy appeared at her door. She cherishes and cares for that dog to this day.

When at times, sister asks for a sign from her dead sister, she tells of a sudden breeze and a whisper in her ear that she can't quite make out.

Ann:

“My mother had another female child between me and my sister. That child, Mary, died soon after she was born. I never knew her. Of course, I wondered how things would have been had she lived. After Jesse died, I had a dream. She was standing with a woman I didn't know. The woman looked familiar. I knew in my heart it was Mary. Mary had found Jesse and they are together. Someday, I will be with them.”

Support

Support for the Siblings of 9/11 took many forms whether family and friends, institutional and/or behavioral health formats. It was surprising to them to find that supports that were expected did not materialize while many unexpected supports became

lifelines to recovery. The ongoing tributes and memorialization of the victims of 9/11 was received with mixed emotions. It could be an indispensable part of their grief recovery or a constant reminder of the “hole in my heart.” Semantics played a part with words like “hero,” “victim” and “murder.”

Sources and resources.

Most of the participants reported a period of feeling “scattered,” “removed” and “unable to focus.” The word scattered translated to the aforementioned metaphor of “having the rug pulled out from under me.” They complained that nothing looked or felt normal. Their explanations made it appear as though they had lost former points of reference and were seeking something to hold on to, something to keep them “buoyed” as one put it or “anchored” as another said. The images of a buoy and an anchor were interesting in conjunction with other complaints such as feeling “at sea,” “unmoored” and “floating” though their overall or specific experiences did not bring into prominence a nautical archetype.

As I stated earlier, support efforts and resources were primarily for the benefit of spouses, children and where there were none, to the parents of the victims. The participants did not seem to key in on that in the beginning. They felt as though they were swept along in the initial days and weeks by the groundswell of sympathy and the large scale rescue, recovery and relief efforts. They talked about how the Red Cross set up staging centers in various public spaces to usher families to lower Manhattan, as well as offer respite for the first responders and other rescue and recovery workers. The nation as a whole responded in whatever way they could. One sibling was at a conference across

the country and woke up to what was happening on the east coast. Though he knew he had to get home, planes were grounded. In a final effort, he rented a car to drive across the country. He was first stopped for speeding in Texas. When he explained his purpose to the state troopers, they gave him a police escort to their border radioing ahead. Troopers in the next state were waiting and provided a continuing escort. He received such an amenity in three states. So, support was vibrant and present, no less than the groundswell of support that generally comes with any death. Neighbors and friends call, send food and offer help in the beginning. In time, it begins to decrease and soon, people expect the bereaved to be who they once were. In most cases, that is not possible. In the case of the Siblings of 9/11, that was impossible.

Those siblings who lost first responders received initial resources through the brotherhoods that New York Fire Department (FDNY), New York Police Department (NYPD), Port Authority Police Department (PAPD) and the Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) provided. Siblings of the so-called civilian victims were the first to begin to feel as though they were second tier family. Bereavement groups became quite prominent offering therapy and a safe place to process feelings. Nine of the participants availed themselves of such services. The two who did not were both males who I assessed as task-oriented and resilient. The nine reported that they had found themselves in groups composed mostly of spouses, more accurately wives of victims and did not feel comfortable with the sharing as it occurred. Most felt disengaged from the group and the group was disengaged from them. Several participants expressed either astonishment or outrage as spouse sharing moved towards issues of recompense and, even more

disturbing to the siblings, dating. It was during this time that the siblings recognized that spouses can acquire a new husband, but they can never get a replacement sibling. While they did not recognize it at the time, they later conceded that they felt the first twinges of marginalization, but didn't know what it meant or how it would affect their grief journey.

Four of those siblings, that is, four participants of this study encountered a siblings' bereavement group. They were referred to this study by their former facilitator. To my knowledge they are unaware of their mutual participation in this study. However, on several occasions, more the one participant made reference to a group member I was able to recognize as another participant. At no point, did than memory of or disclosure about their group experience contradict each other. The facilitator informed me that the group did not start with the intention of being a sibling group. Members came and went over the first 6 months after 9/11 and eventually settled with a select ten who were all siblings. The group lasted in varying configurations from mid-2002 through the end of 2004. Each found that arrangement meaningful for them and ideal for that time in their journeys. They each expressed that being among Families of 9/11 was important because of the shared experience, but being among Siblings of 9/11 helped them to cope with their loss in ways they seemed at a loss to articulate. At best, they can now say that the association went beyond the shared experience of loss and had meaning through the shared acknowledgement that their grief was of a different genre and seemed to be less than accredited.

Some group members also reported individual therapy as well as prescribed psychotropic medication. In addition, a few found support through their places of worship

and business and their communities. I noted that there were mixed reactions to the levels of the initial support from sources that did not cater specifically to siblings (there were few, if any, that did). Most participants viewed those sources with hope and favor initially, but that soon changed to disenchantment as they viewed those sources skewed away from sibling grief.

Summary of Connectedness and Severance

The Siblings of 9/11 found many points of reference forfeit including more than a few relationships that needed to be renegotiated, as well as some for which there was no reconciliation. For the most part, it was not something they saw coming. It was, however, an unavoidable adjunct to the general upheaval that shook the foundations of life as they knew it. The most common relationship breakdown seemed to be in the case where that deceased sibling had a spouse that may have had a nominal, but decidedly legal right to all decisions often leaving the bereaved siblings feeling dismissed and disenfranchised from the process. Additionally, parents who would normally be the source of all support and succor were in the depths of their own grief after the loss of a child and were not available. Siblings of 9/11 found themselves alternately without a role in the proceedings and in the new role of caretaker to parents and those who society saw as in need of support. Siblings of 9/11 had to put their grief on hold in favor of “being strong” for others.

The Siblings of 9/11 reacted to severance by striving to find some balance. They endeavored to make a meaningful psychological connection in lieu of the absent physical connection. Like the sacred places they favor, they applied the same formula of selective,

intimate remembrances and meaningful tributes whether it was in the form of a tattoo or a scholarship in the name of their deceased sibling.

The Siblings of 9/11 were blessed with the support of a nation in mourning, but soon services and support systems focused on spouses and children leaving siblings dismissed and disenfranchised once again. Many sought and found other services such as bereavement groups, counseling and psychotropic medication. These were engaged in recovery. A select group within the cohort of siblings did not require recovery based on their innate level of resilience. In this study that select resilient group was 20% of the total. There is insufficient data to transfer that finding to the wider population of siblings of 9/11, Families of 9/11 or to the population as a whole.

Theme Three: Meaning and Acceptance

It is debatable that the grief process must have a definitive ending. The loss of siblings like the loss of children can be considered outside the natural order and, as such, may defy grief resolution. The Siblings of 9/11 suffered innumerable traumatic stressors, yet in many ways they demonstrated growth and some acknowledgement of the new reality in which they now live and in which further growth is nurtured.

Positive Growth vs. Blocked Growth

After eleven years of living as a Sibling of 9/11, most of the participants feel they are okay with where they are in their progress, but then they add “considering the circumstances.” That phrase imparts a special meaning that can only be understood by those who shared those circumstances. They include an acknowledgement of having grown into who they’ve become. That is a somewhat awkward way of saying that they

have accepted their loss and appreciate how they have developed the ability to deal with the reality of it. Acceptance, as one participant averred, came as a matter of degrees. In terms of the various stages, phases and/or tasks of grief, ten of the participants appear to be well versed in those concepts. Such things have been in the forefront of the news that occupies their daily view and living conditions from continued therapy to self psycho-education to Dr. Phil and every other purveyor of mental health and self-help on TV, the radio, books and the internet. There was only one participant who seemed unaware of the mechanics, philosophy, contents and process of the grief work and seemed surprised at the phrase “grief work.” She was the only participant who actually needed prompting to tell her story through the use of my interview guide. She also seemed unaware of national and world events and commented on such affairs in a naïve sort of way. Yet, her lived experience was hers. It converged with the stories of other participants at certain points, but diverged widely at still others. For her, there are no entitlements to anything dealing with 9/11, no ownership of places or practices, no thoughts of resolution or safety and no use for memorials, but I have to take stock in the value she places on the connection to her brother’s family even as her sister-in-law prepares to remarry. It is all she has now. It is her world and it is as valid a lived experience as any, if it could even be said that way.

There were certain outliers who have not progressed through the grief process in a healthy way. Lisa is a case in point. It is difficult not to assess her as sabotaging herself and her own happiness. Whether I can discount Ted’s (her brother) evaluation of her or not, does not matter. Lisa’s resentments over her perceptions of how her brother’s family

moved through their own process is her reality and continues to be an obstacle to her own grief resolution.

Milestones.

Siblings of 9/11 recognized and chose to simply acknowledge certain milestones along the way and solemnize others while eschewing the importance of many judged to be important by society at large. Most obvious to me was the 10th anniversary. I must admit I went into this study with the expectation that the 10th anniversary would have significant meaning in the grief process of Siblings of 9/11. I naively thought that, perhaps, it would provide marker in the wake of which they could move to a new though unnamed phase in their grief process. The overwhelming response was, “It was just another anniversary. Nothing more. Nothing less.”

Similarly, I had expected the death of Osama bin Laden to be charged with meaning and the release that comes of closure. The reactions, for the most part, were mundane. Every participant found a sense of satisfaction in his death. They all expressed disappointment over how long it took. Only one, the mildest and least confrontational of all, felt that a harsher disposition was in order.

Lena:

“I don’t think they should have given him the proper burial, I mean give me a break. I would have hung him up and let animals eat him in the desert.”

Others took it more in stride, almost devoid of emotion. Their sense of Just World Beliefs in terms of justice and revenge was, in almost all cases, muted and subjugated to their envelopment in the grief process.

Jack:

“I got calls from the Los Angeles Times, Newsday, the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Associated Press, all wanting a family comment and these were all reporters I had dealt with before on 9/11-related matters. I guess I was on their list of people to call to comment. I took some of those calls and some I didn’t. I always felt like Bin Laden would be caught. I felt like it took far too long and couldn’t really understand why it would take so long to find this one guy. I was very gratified that he was caught and it didn’t bother me at all that he was killed, other than there would have been some satisfaction in having him stand in front of the world and answer publicly for his crimes.”

Time in conjunction with intentionality and mindfulness was an important factor in the healing process, but time deadened their reaction to the death of Osama bin Laden because “it took too long.”

Meaning making.

Meaning Making lent itself to be more interpretative than the former categories. Meaning Making seemed to be an unsteady process and very subjective in nature. It had something of a longitudinal sweep by virtue of the interminable reach of the process, a distinct lack of resolution and a broad discounting of the concept of closure.

They appreciated the fact that they were still human in their striving for a level of self-actualization that manifested as a new order of strength, an appreciation for life and an awareness that anything can happen, but not one of the Siblings of 9/11 considered that anything had ended, that anything was over. In some ways, they appeared grateful that their respective journeys had forward momentum and saw that thrust as emblematic of empowerment. Empowerment was the positive outcome for most of the participants and became portend of a new stage in the grief process. Not a stage as defined from a

theoretical perspective, but one manifested as an outgrowth of acquiescence to the incomprehensibility of the ambiguous and public nature of their losses. Empowerment meant ownership and ownership meant rejecting impositions by those whose attempts at empathic understanding was less than accurate. To the Sibling of 9/11, it was simply those who “didn’t get it.”

Lisa was the only one to choose a different path. For her, 9/11 was an impediment to empowerment possibly for all time. Certainly, there was little indication of impetus for her in the past 11 years.

Closure.

The term closure is much overused in grief therapy. It can mean having enough information to conclude something. The participants were clear in their objection to and rejection of the word. Does it mean my crying will end? Does it mean I won’t feel the loss anymore? Does it mean I will forget my sibling? Does it mean I’ve moved on and left all this behind me? These are the questions that swirled around the word and left participants shaking their heads. The prevailing theme of their narratives was that closure was not possible. Some participants spoke simply and sadly making the point that ambiguity may preclude closure.

Rose:

“What will bring us closure? I don’t know the answer. I don’t think I will have closure. Do you ever have closure? I don’t know. Everybody talks about it, right, and I’ve experienced my brother’s murder, my father’s death, and does closure mean that you actually see someone die and you got to say what you wanted to say? Is that it? I don’t know how you define closure. I think it’s different for everybody.”

Ann:

“It is stupid. I don’t know what it means either. [Giggles] Like I said, I always contrast things with my father and just because I buried him what is closure? I don’t understand. No, I don’t really understand what that means. I mean when somebody is taken away from you whether it’s natural causes like my dad dying or the situation with my sister I don’t understand what closure means.”

The recognition that their siblings were not coming back resonated with them and set up a resistance to the idea of an ending. For Ben, it’s just a “buzzword,” absent of meaning in this context. The refrains of accountability and disenfranchisement persist throughout his dialogue and make an appearance in others. For Ben, there can be no closure, ever.

For Nora, the simple truth is Greg disappeared and not coming back. Her son, who was nine on 9/11, is now in the army and on his way to Afghanistan. For her, one door closes and another opens.

Changed Worldview

Acceptance

The Siblings of 9/11 struggle with acceptance. They know that, like forgiveness, it is not about condoning what has been done. It’s not about being okay with what has happened. When asked if they have come to accept what happened, half of the participants seemed surprised. Anger sparked in some as though how dare I ask. Confusion showed in the eyes of others as though they hadn’t considered it before. Anger and confusion stopped them in their tracks and, like closure, they claimed to not know what acceptance was. The other half said they have come to acknowledge it and rationalize it as a healing for one’s self; as taking back control of one’s self.

Loraine:

“I accept that he really isn’t coming back. Do I think he died? Yes, because I know he would have called. Do I think he’s walking out there with amnesia? No. Do I accept that this was a horrific act that never should have happened on our soil? Do I accept that? Do I accept the act? No, I don’t. I mean in a way I have to because it happened. It doesn’t mean that I condone it; it just means that it happened. Yes I get it and it’s almost about how you define forgiveness. When people say do you forgive, I say forgiveness is not about condoning a person’s actions. It’s about healing yourself so that you can take another step forward. but I’m moving forward and I’m not going to let them control my life anymore. I’m not going to let what they did to my brother control me.”

Considering the perception of their pre-9/11 relationship with their sibling and the course of their lives over the past 11 years, each participant felt confident in answering a miracle question of sorts that gave voice to the deceased sibling in the here and now. That voice represented a degree of acceptance. Several participants verbalized what they believe their siblings thoughts would have been around acceptance. Even those who couldn’t find it for themselves proposed that sibling could appreciate the concept. It was as though they wanted to convey more thoughtful, indulgent and appreciative attributes to their brothers and sisters. For the most part, they imagined their siblings saying, “It’s okay,” “I’m okay” and “I want you to be okay.”

Nora:

“I think that he would say ‘I’m okay’ and ‘thanks for all you’ve done, thanks for keeping my name out there and keeping me in your lives, keeping me with you all the time. I’m proud of the kids, how they’ve grown and they’re good kids.’”

Loraine:

““I didn’t know you loved me that much. You made my name public. You brought it out there and everybody is

proud of me.' That's what he would say. It's something that he took for granted, you know, his job, seeing people's reactions and mine and what I have brought to his name. I think he would be happy. I think he'd be OK with it."

I member checked with a few of those who had either hesitated at or rejected the concept of acceptance. I felt it would be a difficult discussion with Lisa and Ben, but called them anyway. It was difficult. Lisa picked up exactly where she left off and began crying immediately. She said she could never accept the idea that her brother had died under such circumstance nor could she accept that she had to live the rest of her life without him. Lisa rejected the thought that acceptance was a part of the healing process. She was adamant that it was a betrayal of her brother's memory.

Ben surprised me at first. He was unsteady in his response, but rationalized the value of acceptance. It soon became apparent that his concept of acceptance was based on the acquisition of what had been missing throughout his grief journey.

Ben:

"You have to accept the reality of things or you're not rational. It's not my imagination. I know my brother died, but he was murdered in ways that are hard to accept. There's no body. There's no rhyme or reason. It was not a natural phenomenon. It may have been different if I was to visit my brother in a hospital and he died. I would be very, very pained, you know, in grief, but it wouldn't have the components that it had in 9/11."

The third member I checked with was more philosophical. She recognized that acceptance can only come in degrees. You don't wake up one morning and accept what happened. It's is part of a process and it is different for everyone. That became the

overriding conclusion. It is very different for each participant, not only in the timing, but in the nuts and bolts of what is being accepted.

Lessons learned.

Asking participants about meaning-making was tricky business. It was difficult to find the right words to see if they had found any positives in the immeasurable negative they experienced. In every case, participants responded well to the prospective of having learned important lessons on their respective journeys. The learning took the form of awareness. It is awareness of the fragility of life, the shortness of life, the need to find happiness, the need to be safe, to know what bravery is and to hold on to love wherever you find it, to care for others and provide support, to know you have choices and to be alert to the fact that things can happen quickly in this world. They learned that 9/11 had a strange duality that both enlightened them and frightened them at the same time. They understood the difference between moving on and moving forward.

Jack:

“My feeling was I could have taken more time to be with my brother. We could have stopped to smell the roses a little bit more. When somebody dies young at 40, you realize, ‘Oh, man.’ That’s one of my lessons; I mean I try to appreciate every day now.”

Lorraine:

“I guess I learned what bravery means. What it means to be a good person means. To help others and to always, you know, stay alert, stay strong and know who you are. Know your capabilities. And always be, always be kind to yourself first and if you’re kind to yourself, you’ll be kind to others.”

So, appreciation for life seems to be the bottom line for Siblings of 9/11. It may have taken them 11 years to learn that lesson, but it’s more likely they knew it all along.

Losing a sibling in the circumstances of 9/11 may have brought it more firmly into their consciousness. As one stated, if she could get through this, she believes she could get through everything. Knowing where their strengths lie is another lesson they've have learned as they have moved through this journey.

Renewed purpose.

Having come this far over the past 11 years has helped the Siblings of 9/11 understand and appreciate that life finds a way to continue in all circumstances, but not without the development of both personal insight and inner-strength. They see where their value lies with renewed vigor and confidence. With the exception of Lisa, all of them feel stronger and more intentional than they've ever been. Lisa is stuck in place as though her inability to move forward somehow validates the legitimacy of her grief. The existential vacuum most of them encountered at one point or another in their journeys has converted to meaning and purpose that fuels their future-oriented determinism.

Nora:

“I probably was a considerate decent human being beforehand, but I think now I'm hypersensitive about if I see somebody struggling with something, whatever, somebody needs money in a store. I'm a little more hyper aware of that kind of stuff now. I don't even really consider it going out of my way to help, I just feel like it's the right thing to do. In my mind I'm doing it because I just want to do it in Greg's spirit.”

The lost siblings are always in sight, always with them, always in mind and many of their actions are predicated on that awareness and justified by it. Their meaning making takes their losses and reframes them into an ability to make gains for others whether it is Nora reaching into her pocket or Jack reaching into his humanity.

Jack:

“If the history books are only about the attacks and the ensuing wars and all that crap, if it’s only about that and not about how people responded then we’ve really lost something here. I mean we’re old enough to remember the way it was after 9/11 and it was unprecedented in our nation’s history - the response to it. I mean now it’s almost expected and natural in the wake of Hurricane Sandy and other disasters the way people step forward and pitch in and collectively do whatever they can. After 9/11 that was a lot of new territory there and it really showed how people could put aside their differences and come together in a demonstration of great humanity.”

Most of the participants have a different view of safety in the world. Those with a religious or spiritual outlook have taken a new look at how they view their relationship with their God and how they perceive their relationship with the human community.

Casey:

“I recognize that, my naïve belief that God keeps good people safe was very wrong. I knew that I could leave this building and a bus could hit me. So, I became more protective of the kids. Before, I was like nothing’s going to happen. Things happen!! Young people die. And when my daughter at eleven now says ‘That’s not fair!’ I say, ‘Who told you life is fair? Ask my sister if life is fair.’ And I know that’s harsh for an eleven year old, life isn’t fair. Dena got up and went to work and a building fell on her head. Is that fair? That changed me.

Ben was the most vocal and felt he was the most isolated in his grief. He used the word “marginalized” five times in his opening statement. Being alone may be a construct of Ben’s method of social interactions. In the end, Ben rounded out everything the other participants had said with a simple, yet profound statement. He said, “Nothing’s changed, but everything’s changed.”

Summary of Meaning and Acceptance

The Siblings of 9/11 recognize the fact that they have been on a journey. From their current perspective, they are able to look back over the past 11 years and pinpoint distinctive moments that stand out in their memories. They are neither elusive nor apologetic about the state of affairs they have found themselves in at different times and now recall in concise detail. While they concede that there have been decisive markers that defined chapters with beginnings and endings along the way, those slices of time often did not coincide with the nation's and media's timeline nor did they necessarily correspond to each other's. Nevertheless, each participant was as clear and concise about what was important to them as they were about what was not. What was important was something they held onto and it allowed them to move through the process in a way that provided meaning even if they didn't see it at the time. It was easy for me, then, to see how a word like "closure" could not possibly hold meaning. It wasn't so much that they were unable to find closure as they were unwilling to stop on their quest for meaning and empowerment. For the most part, it was a lifelong journey.

The Siblings of 9/11 deconstructed the notion of acceptance into separate parts of the reality of what happened and the excusing of what happened. Both acceptance and its corollary, forgiveness, set the stage for an internal debate that most seemed to gain insight from. It was interesting to watch them work through the implications. The implications led them to reflect on the nature of their siblings' personalities and how they would have viewed 9/11 and how they would respond to it today. The reflection brought them to the here-and-now as they saw their sibling relationship still alive and

evolving. Their siblings, for the most part, exhibited gratitude. It has been, after all, about them. However, the Siblings of 9/11 marked the difference between life and death and, going forward, saw life as both fragile and precious. They learned many lessons the price of which was far too high, but having paid that price, they were intent on getting their money's worth. Meaning making, empowerment and lessons learned endorsed a renewed purpose. Such purpose was not unanimous in its application. For some, it was living life more fully. For others, it was creating a legacy of service to others. For others still, it hadn't yet crystalized. For all, nothing is over.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This study is a qualitative inquiry asking the question, “What is the lived-in experience over the past 11 years of those who have lost a sibling on 9/11?” The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of that lived experience of 11 participants as they have worked through an unparalleled grief process over the past 11 years. The lived experience as the participants communicated it revealed a ground level, first person tour into a singular grief process without a discernible end and the life changing transformations and rearrangements they endured. The time frame spanned the 11 year period starting with 9/11 and ending in the here-and-now. The participants consisted of eight women and three men. One of the men and one of the women were siblings themselves having lost a sibling in common. Ten of the 11 embraced the opportunity to tell their story and the story of their respective siblings in a purposeful narrative. One seemed tentative and needed constant prompting and probing.

The tragedy of 9/11 intensified the concept of loss by the additional elements of excessive media coverage imposing a “celebrity” status to the deaths and to the families. The fact that the remains of over 1700 victims were never found or are unidentified imparts an unprecedented level of ambiguity to the loss. Many of the family members seem to have suffered through a provisional existence in the futile wait for any semblance of closure. I have seen that the participants of this study were siblings whose grief appears to have been suppressed as they found themselves in caregiver mode for those who were thought to have a greater loss. At the end of their interview, the majority have

expressed that they finally have a witness to whom they can tell their stories, who would listen intently and allow the opportunity to process how they were able to realize and celebrate a symbolic connection to their deceased sibling.

I will discuss the most significant findings to help us understand how siblings deal with the sudden loss of someone through violent means, someone who they fully expected to share their life with.

Literature Discussion

Two important sections of the literature review gave me the foundation to synthesize the positionality of my participants. Those sections were about sibling relationships, and grief and loss. The melding of the two sections brought into focus the who and the what of my study and formulated the basis for viewing and understanding the lived experience of the Siblings of 9/11.

The literature indicates that the sibling relationship is one of endurance starting at a very young age, indeed, from when they are first aware of each other with the expectation that it will persist longer than any other relationship (Halstead-Cleak & Morgan, 2010; Kluger, 2006; Nandwana & Katoch, 2009). The longevity of the relationship allows many opportunities for siblings to impact the developmental process of each other including mediating, modeling and other influences that begins the course of social learning and helps the siblings transition into and negotiate future relationships from a more accomplished and stable worldview (Bowlby, 1982; Congers et al., 2009; Moser et al., 2005).

The literature further indicates that there is a great amount of interest and a firm foundation of research around the concepts of grief and loss (Smith, McCullough & Poll, 2003; Worden, Davies & McCown, 1999; Worden, 2001). The fact that grief and loss are existential givens presents us with a set of circumstances that will impact all humans at one time or many to one degree or many. That level of impact can and will manifest on all human dimensions: physical, emotional, cognitive, behavioral and spiritual (Humphrey, 2009; Kubler-Ross & Kessler, 2005; Parkes, 1995; Worden, 2004).

I have considered the research on sibling relationships and on grief and loss as I undertook this research project and coupled that specifically with the tragic and unparalleled event of 9/11 to gain a greater level of understanding of the lived experience of the Siblings of 9/11 over the past 11 years. My findings reflect these two areas of interest because the participants were intent on telling the story of their grief journeys. Their journeys were a direct result of the nature of their sibling relationship and the subsequent reactions of grief and loss. That is the principal purpose for their participation. That had to be honored.

Summary of Main Findings

The Siblings of 9/11 were impacted on many levels by a variety of factors throughout their 11 year journey. Certain dynamics were imposed upon them by external forces, i.e. family, friends, society, media, religious affiliations and public discourse. Other dynamics were manifest from an internal source in the way they strove to realize a semblance of recovery, usually perceived as a sense of peace. Most learned to cope as best they could with the impositions. Some initiated change to modify their availability to

and acceptance of external forces. All strove to reach a point of resolve that had meaning for them, each with varying success, a few with very little. The lived experience of the 11 participants was affected in large measure by all that moved into their field of perception and entered their awareness. It was awareness that shaped the themes listed in Figures 2, 3 and 4 found in Chapter Four. The themes emerged from the implicit concerns of the Siblings of 9/11

1. Ambiguity in the Public Eye
 - a. The pain of no remains, no traditional rituals and no final resting place.
 - b. The disenfranchisement they felt in public and family venues.
2. Connectedness and Severance
 - a. Renegotiating or dissolving certain relationships
 - b. Yearning to reconnect with their dead sibling in a meaningful way
3. Meaning and Acceptance
 - a. Find meaning in the unimaginable loss and applying lessons learned
 - b. Reinvestment in one's self

Some of these concerns, notably 2a, 2b, 3a and 3b are situations or tasks the bereaved may deal with as they grapple with “ordinary” losses (Worden, 2001), i.e. the kinds of losses that can be understood to be part of the natural order of things. These natural order losses would be exclusive of the death of children or siblings; death from murder and violence; deaths from suicide. The circumstances of 9/11 imbued a complexity and complication that made the normal and expected tasks of grief move into the realm of uncharted territory.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity was a prevalent theme across the many facets of the grief process within the context of 9/11. That is to say, it seemed to be an integral part of the sibling awareness as they did their grief work. Outwardly, it was evident in the sudden disappearance of nearly 3,000 individuals and in the way society assigns weight to the depth of one's loss based on perceptions of relational values. While 9/11 ambiguity has its roots largely in the lack of physical presence, it can also take up residence in the ongoing negotiations around connectedness and severance to family and others.

Boss' (1992) definition of ambiguous loss rings true for the Siblings of 9/11. The overwhelming fact that there was no or partial remains left them not knowing if their loved one was present or not. For 1717 families (September 11th Families Association, 2012), the long wait for the Medical Examiner's phone call or absence thereof prompted them to remain hopeful for far longer than was intellectually sound. Yet, they agonized that entire time. Grief mixed with fear was provisional and, yet, very present. There was no definitive proof at all in the early weeks and months. For many, the tentative acceptance of reality came only as a matter of losing hope. Finally losing hope arose from an intellectual inference that did not synch up with the emotional reckoning. It is safe to say that for the Siblings of 9/11 and, presumably, for all those for whom there is ambiguous loss, rationality arrives when hope is lost, but emotional resolution morphs into a grief that is no longer provisional and remains unresolved independent of a discernible timeframe. Worden's (2001) assertion that bereavement timeframes are subjective and cannot be standardized is validated. He made that assertion in discussing

the tasks necessary for healthy grief work formulated in the framework of precedential grief and loss. The Siblings of 9/11 exemplify grief without a pattern. Their lack of a timeframe persists eleven years later and they fully expect the residue of 9/11 to remain with them for life.

Hayden's (1987) archeological research found that funeral rituals have been performed by humans for over 100,000 years. His research strongly suggests that humans consider such rituals important markers in terms of the beginning of mourning and the definitive reality of death. Again, most of the Siblings of 9/11 were denied the benefit of a final leave-taking. The lack of funereal trappings left them without the structure that lends to some sense of stability in a time of chaos. The work of Castle and Phillips (2003) asserts that there is a correlation between the communal and cultural bonds a funeral affords and the beginning of a healthy grief process. Hence, there was a plethora of memorials as substitutes to the necessary collective remembrance. The memorials exceeded the norm and became a precedent in their own right. Memorials have always existed, but one wonders if 9/11 has not cemented the concept of memorials into the human awareness to the point where we now see commemorations on street corners, highway shoulders and sites of violent and tragic deaths on a regular basis.

The Siblings of 9/11 also endured a sense of ambiguity relative to their status as a sibling. This occurred in two separate settings: the public space and the extended family. In the public space, the Siblings of 9/11 encountered an attitude in line with Wray's (2003) "dismissive condolences" (p. 4). People outside of the family offered condolences that participants thought as somehow lessened because of the fact they "were just

siblings.” While that may not have been the original intent, it was nonetheless disenfranchising to the extent that the bereaved siblings suffered a second tier status. Their reaction to this was suppressed by the fact there was an imposed obligation to be present for those to whom society attributed a greater ownership of grief. In fact, the siblings have experienced social intimidation presaging a delayed grief response. Within the context of 9/11, greater ownership meant spouses, children and parents of the victims. The participants had become an appendage to the process and their own grief was postponed endorsing the writings of DeVita (2007), White (2008) and Wray (2003). Those who were immersed in this dynamic have not yet recovered, but have, instead, come to realize that the notion of severance can persist on a plane that is exclusive of death, i.e. severed relationships with the living.

Connectedness and Severance

On the surface, the tragedy of 9/11 seemed to be about the attacks and the resulting devastation and loss. What is less conspicuous is the disruptive effect on what families consider a normal state of being. Consistency has become forfeit, communication has become disordered and the overall composition of the family shifted. The loss infiltrated every aspect of the family dynamic. The participants were siblings within that family system, but so were the deceased and, as such, children to their parents. In many instances, the deceased themselves were spouses and parents in their own right. The disruption to the family dynamic appears to have taken its greatest toll in the meaning system that had been evolving since the family had become a unit unto itself.

Connectedness here seemed to be the active form of attachment. Attachment, as Bowlby (1982) pointed out, is an evolutionary process that ensures the survival of the species. It is a behavioral system that seeks to protect, mitigate stress and allow for growth. I see connectedness as an existential concept that sums up the objects of our human strivings for such as needs as belonging, love and self-worth. Without connectedness, humans are faced with the existential crises of isolation and meaninglessness. As humans, we develop in relation to others. This is not lost on the Siblings of 9/11. They fully admit to Cicarelli's (1995) characterization of sibling relationships (see page 10). The pursuit of lasting connectedness in the face of ambiguity is always a great challenge. As such, the Siblings of 9/11 have created a new construct to epitomize the relationship they now have. To their credit and innovation, they have refocused their connectedness to make meaningful contact with their lost siblings. The means are specific and varied. Some of the stories of continued contact with their deceased sibling can cause a chill or a shake of the head. Whatever one makes of these instances, whether they can be thought of as wishful thinking, self-fulfilling prophecies, imagination, or delusions brought on by intense grief, each of these particular stories were told with a surety and a sense of wonder that precludes a challenge. For the Siblings of 9/11, the connection is real and meaningful and, by their own convictions, have helped them in their journey

Because of the specificity, each particular creation is subjective in nature and defies transferability. The concept, however, put the expected life journey on a different trajectory, perhaps spiritual in nature, and allows for a continued and significant presence

in the life of the bereaved. The continuum of the sibling relationship is preserved in a way that the participants can accept. Nandwana and Katoch (2009) state that siblings can expect to be part of one another's life for 80% to 100% of their total lifespans. For some, continuing bonds preserve that promise to a limited, but satisfying degree and is, in many cases, the antidote to severance.

The reality of in-laws and the relationships thereof are often the material of innuendos and jokes. The innuendos persist in this setting, but, for the Siblings of 9/11, the situation has been anything but funny. They call them "horror stories" and they endure whether the participants have suffered them or not. The larger population of families of 9/11 has been communal in their shared experience. From that perspective, the journey that each has been on has been mirrored in some way across families. They tend to know each other and of each other. In addition to sharing in their grief, the mutuality of the event that brought them together and the paradigms that defines their collective destiny have created archetypes to represent who they are as an assemblage. These archetypes are negative images that are understood across systemic boundaries, but are developed and colored by each participant to exemplify the individuality that is theirs. One such archetype has been the newly uncertain relationship with the spouse of the deceased sibling. Two participants chose to demonize the spouse. I would be tempted to view that partly as a product of their incapacity to move through the grief process in a healthy way. Whether demonization of the spouse is contemplated or not, relationships for many became tentative early on. That same societal imposition of being strong for

those deemed to have lost more can go so far and the Siblings of 9/11 came to the realization that while that might be so, they have not lost less.

The idea of preserving connectedness where possible and accepting severance where it was not set the stage for the need to renegotiating relationships. There was not necessarily an awareness of the fact that the relationship with one's self was in jeopardy and needed reassessment. The permanent severance from the physical personification of the sibling left participants in an existential dilemma. The missing sibling who was the exact person to provide counsel and support in the face of the dilemma was the very reason for it. Finding the means to provide access to the lost one became the quest and, in nearly every case, access was possible. Each participant has moved forward powered by their own actualizing tendency to be open to the experience, live in the moment, trust their own intuition and, ultimately, find meaning in living life to the fullest. After 11 years, they were no longer defaulting to irrational thinking when it came to their siblings.

Siblings of 9/11 complained often about the expectations of others as they moved through the grief process, how some people were tired of their grief and the overall concept of 9/11 ("9/11 Fatigue," as one participant called it), how certain people wanted them to be who they once were and how others saw them as a link to 9/11, i.e. they now know someone who lost someone. As macabre as that might seem, it was more common than expected. It came to different participants at different points in their journeys, but they all came to what one had called "a great insight." They were not answerable to anyone but to themselves; they were no longer the same person as they used to be; and they needed to do what they needed to do, irrespective of what others thought. If others

needed a connection, it could either be ignored or used it as an opportunity to tell their siblings' stories. They realize in the end that they have suffered the ultimate severance. An attachment figure was torn from them and that left a ragged hole, one that cannot be filled.

Meaning and Acceptance

Half of the participants of the study found themselves in full recovery mode (though not recovered, *per se*) in the beginning and some continued to struggle through the first five or six years. This stands as a testament to the volatility and inconsistency of recovery timeframes. Recovery for them can be termed as the effort to reverse a withdrawal from normal functioning. One participant is not yet recovered and may never return to what she considered normal functioning. This does not mean the others are not still saddened by the loss and expend great effort to maintain stability, but a permanence of sorts, a normalcy of sorts has been achieved. The other half seemed able to maintain stability and self-control from the beginning denoting a strong level of resilience. This seems to match Bonanno et al. (2006) who assert that 53.9% of the population of New York City that were polled showed high levels of resilience six months after the attacks. However, those participants may or may not have lost anyone and may or may not have been in proximity to any of the sites and may have only witnessed the event through the media. Nevertheless, they are residents of New York City. It happened in their city as a threat to their overall integrity. There is, therefore, some indication that a proportion of the population is highly resilient and can maintain equilibrium in the aftermath of

extraordinary stressors, i.e. half of those polled in New York City and half of those interviewed in my study.

Those participants who I assessed as having higher resilience found acceptance easier and faster than those immersed in recovery. It was a very different process. Those who were in recovery only reached acceptance when they were able to recognize that they were working through a process that was unsteady and tended to be something of a slippery slope. Intellectually, they knew their sibling had died, but emotionally they had lost their moorings and any forward motion was interspersed with backward steps. It was the acceptance of the backward steps as an integral and necessary part of the process that allowed them a positive outcome.

Growth

I stated in Chapter Four that the participants have grown into who they've become (p. 141). It appears on the surface that that phrase might be applied to everyone working through a life transition and encountering a disturbance. Life transitions are ubiquitous and represent an incomplete Gestalt or pattern of human dimensions that allows for a functional unit that is greater than the sum of its parts. The ensuing need for creative and constructive adjustment is the positive side of mental health. As humans, when we are aware of a conflict with the givens of our existence, anxiety follows. Anxiety prompts a defense that ultimately restricts growth (Yalom, 1980). The individual facing the need for adjustment has only two choices: change the source of the disturbance or adapt and cope with it.

Distancing one's self from the disturbance can be an effective way to cope with it, but the life transition the Siblings of 9/11 faced did not allow them the luxury of distancing. That would have been antithetical to the nature of their relationships and counterintuitive to definition of attachment. Instead, creatively adapting to a world in which their sibling no longer existed in physical form was the only course open to them. That course proved to be life's major challenge, a major challenge that even after eleven years leaves the participants with the ongoing desire to process their journey yet another time with all emotion of the initial experience still present. Those who have, in fact, grown into who they've become did so in an intentional way by taking ownership at some point in their journey and making purposeful choices.

Ownership of the journey translates to ownership of their lived experience and purposeful choices precipitates meaning making. What they have taken with them and what they have decided to leave behind notwithstanding, the terms of ownership are of a personal and distinctive preference and is not subject to arbitration. In grief counseling, the bereaved make meaning where they can ultimately make sense of their loss. Within the context of 9/11, making sense seemed forfeit as were all no points of reference. In lieu of making sense, there was an acute awareness of the purposeful goal of not leaving anyone behind that mandated a quest to find how they might take their loved one with them in life. Despite the lack of physical availability of their sibling, the participants concede they themselves continue to live and they can find means within themselves to pursue a future that includes psychological availability.

I looked for continuing bonds in the form of objects, artifacts, rituals and observances, but found them most often in the ability to rationally and emotionally reposition their deceased sibling on a spiritual level to keep them there for the duration of their lives. I looked for closure in the form of a definitive sense of resolution in a prolonged process, but, as a new possibility, accept that it may be nothing more profound than closing the lid on the receptacle for one's own remains.

I looked at recovery as a return to a previous level of normal functioning and was lacking in the perceptiveness to see that the concept "normal" can be a condition on a subjective growth continuum. As such, it has the propensity to evolve on five human dimensions: physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral and spiritual. Tedeschi and McNally (2011), in their study of posttraumatic stress in combat veterans, indicate that survivors of traumatic events have experienced posttraumatic growth which they explain as "positive personal changes that result from their struggle to deal with trauma and its psychological consequences" (p. 19). For the most part, those who lost a loved one in the violent attacks of 9/11 and have worked through the ambiguity and public intensity following their loss have exhibited positive personal changes that can be explained in terms of posttraumatic growth. In consideration of that, it seems it is not possible to return to a previous level of normal function, but, rather, to maintain a new and enhanced level of functioning. The enhancement includes an insight into the fragility of life and a new appreciation and reassessment for life as it can be. It would also seem that given the time, resources and support to do one's grief work around the disturbance, essentials that

the sibling of 9/11 certainly acquired, and internalizing lessons learned as a result, trauma can encourage a new resilient state of being.

Limitations

The study has several limitations, one of which is inherent in the very nature of a qualitative inquiry as it does not promise generalization. As mention earlier, the specialized characteristics of the participants, the context in which they have evolved and in which they are being viewed, and the timeframe precludes generalization to a wider population in terms of those specifics. One difficulty would depend on whether or not the presenting problem has a time constraint, i.e. carried out immediately after a particular event or experience. This particular study has the prodigious limitation of being relevant only to a very specific group (those who lost siblings) and the circumstances in which the loss occurred (9/11). The timeframe is 11 years after the event and that may be thought of as a stretch that could possibly have blurred facts and altered certain memories. However, the participants make a dependable and consistent claim of a clear and intact memory of the events around that day and the ensuing weeks and months, as well as the long, struggling progress over the years – without doubt, a truly lived experience.

The fact that participants were recruited from listservs that served the bereaved families and individuals of the 9/11 attacks and a group that specifically targeted siblings suggests that those who have not reached out for services or who are otherwise marginalized did not have the opportunity to have their voices heard. It is also conceivable that participants who did respond to my outreach efforts would have had a

more positive outcome and an enlightened outlook as a result of services sought, offered and received.

It is apparent that the demographics of the participants may not represent a fair and varied sample in terms of gender, culture, ethnicity, religion, SES, age and other multicultural considerations. Most participants are residents of or are familiar with the culture of the Tri-state or Greater New York area of the country and are either currently living there or had grown up there. As such, voices of minorities, disenfranchised individuals or those for whom there is a lack of proximity and where recruitment is precluded may not be heard, a further limitation of the study.

The data makes it clear that there are differences in the way various participants reacted throughout the 11 year journey perhaps based on their gender and the gender of their respective sibling. That is to say, of the eleven participants, only two lost a sister. The remaining majority including three males had lost brother. It is not possible from this data to discern differential reactions of sisters who lost sisters, brothers who lost brothers, sisters who lost brothers and brothers who lost sisters, nor can I make a definitive statement as to the effect of birth order in these instances.

Lastly, this study did not initially take into account whether the 9/11 victim was a first responder or a civilian or whether the victim's presence at the disaster site was purposeful, i.e. part of a usual day, or incidental to it.

Implications for Counseling

I adhere to the notion that working through the grief process is, in fact, work and that the bereaved cannot take a passive role if they hope to reach a point of satisfactory

resolution. Notice the phrase “satisfactory resolution.” It stands in direct contrast to what we might call “final resolution.” In grief work, I believe there cannot be final resolution. Someone is missing for whom there can be no substitute. I often utilize the metaphor of crossing a river without a boat or a bridge. One must get into the water, feel the cold, and be buffeted by the current. That is the only way to get to the other side. The point, of course, is that the bereaved must take an active part in the grief work knowing full well that such work would be a full or, at least, partial immersion into the pain of the loss. Climbing up out of the water represents a point of acceptance of not only the reality of the death, but the veracity of existential vitality that can still be had. Standing on the “other side” epitomizes empowerment, being fully present in the world with access to the deceased retained. This metaphor not only provides a powerful visual, but, in general, validates the notion of metaphorical representations in therapy.

Family squabbles, disagreements, severance and other such disturbances are common in all families, but those problems are more predictable when the family dynamic has been afflicted with a loss. In bereavement counseling, awareness and identification of the shifting tides within the family dynamic is crucial. Those shifts will often impact the grief work of the bereaved exacerbating the disruption in functioning. In the case of sibling loss, the shifts can engender a sense of disenfranchisement. Uncertain relationships and unsatisfactory attempts at modifications can generate ambiguity as to the support system and presage other unforeseen losses. Helping the client navigate the perils of family discord in a way that keeps the co-constructed goal of counseling in perspective is central to a positive outcome.

Despite familial upheaval, functioning has already departed from a normal course. The bereaved are often beleaguered by well-wishers who are tired of sadness, fearful of causing more pain and who want the bereaved to return to former state of normalcy. A return to that same normal is generally not possible and must be reframed to reconcile with the new environment without the deceased's physical presence. A counselor would do well to work with the client towards the new and positive experience of posttraumatic growth that will overlay the former operating system.

While generalization is not the purpose or even possible in qualitative research based on the wide range of subjective experience even within the same construct, I would suggest that can be some transferable knowledge is attainable.

- The grief process is subject and not subject to predetermined, linear stages
- The grief process does not have a definitive ending
- There are always lessons learned as one proceeds through the grief process, but the bereaved are never grateful for those lessons. The price was too high.
- Semantics matter and such words as "closure," and "victims," to name a few, are not only rejected, but objected to.
- Final recognition of life's fragility often inspires a new appreciation for life.
- Humans are resourceful and will create new rituals and define new meaning in the absence of the traditional and known.
- Acceptance comes in the form of a shift in the locus of control from external to internal. In short, it is the recognition that you are not answerable to anyone in your grief journey.

- Trauma promotes resilience.
- Ambiguity is a show stopper.

Future Research

In the swirl of public interest, media attention and scholarly study, there are many perspectives from which the phenomenon of 9/11 has been viewed. Many of the limitations in the preceding section can be considered topics for future research. There are several compelling ideas that warrant continued observation and future work. In this study, I made a brief foray into the dynamics of gender specificity and positionality. The scope of this study, as well as the participant pool gave only tantalizing glimpses of certain patterns based on gender. The gender mix was not only in terms of the participant pool, but takes into account sisters who lost brothers, brothers who lost brothers, sisters who lost sisters and brothers who lost sisters. Of those four permutations, the largest contingent in this study consisted of six sisters who lost brothers. The next was comprised of three brothers who lost brothers and, finally, there were two sisters who lost sisters. Of the original pool of respondents consisted of 25 females, 23 of whom lost a brother and six males, all of whom lost a brother. Interestingly, there were no respondents and, therefore, no participants who fit the category of brothers who lost sisters. These facts show a provocative pattern the meaning of which is obscured within the confines of the current study.

Based on the analysis of the data such as it is, it is not possible to come to definitive conclusions about gender specificity with regard to Siblings of 9/11. On the surface, it would appear that the small size of the data set precludes a conclusion of any

merit other than to say there are certain observable trends I can point to. I can say that in my study, women who lost a brother were more inclined to respond and find a sense of value in their participation and men who lost a sibling, in general, seem less inclined to share and, perhaps, when they did, there is a secondary agenda or they have a discernible personality characteristic in common.

Future research could uncover important data as to the propensity of females to respond more readily to such a study and as to the nature of the sister to brother relationship that provided the pool of participants as it is.

As stated, the means of recruitment was through listservs that serve the population known as the Families of 9/11. In reaching out through these listservs, my recruitment script did not reach those siblings who were not proactive in partaking of the news and information imparted by the listservs - either through lack of awareness or by choice. There are other broader databases administered by various other organizations where outreach to the broader population of Siblings of 9/11 might be achieved. To some extent, those organizations are necessarily guarded and protective of their data bases and access would take greater time and persistence

A limitation of this study was the constricted range of participants in terms of those who lost siblings, a subset of the larger population of Families of 9/11. While I believe this was a worthy cohort and deserving of individual attention based on the predisposition for disenfranchisement, it would seem that future research could gain useful insight into the grief patterns and lived experiences of other specific cohorts who have a loss associated with 9/11.

Conclusion

I take the position that it is not important for my purpose and the purpose of this study to mediate or justify where the subjective journeys of my participants are divergent. They have been at many points. In fact, it is that divergence that is the quintessence of qualitative inquiry. Every presentation is viewed through the lens of the research question which I reiterate here: “What is the lived-in experience over the past 11 years of those who have lost a sibling on 9/11?” I take that question not only at its face value, but in the spirit of qualitative inquiry. The stories of two of my participants who were they themselves siblings who lost a brother in common seemed as though they lived in different families with totally different experiences. Their stories have more relevance than the dichotomy they exhibit, yet the dichotomy yields a measure lived experience and means just that. Lisa’s perception is her reality. Ted’s reality includes his perception of Lisa. There can be no right or wrong within this context.

The emergent nature of qualitative inquiry has afforded me an insider’s look into the lived experience of a particular cadre of bereaved individuals and has allowed me to grow in awareness of them and with them. That was their take away and mine. The take away on a more absolute level is that everyone’s life is storied. That goes without saying. That goes without exception. In those stories, I have found knowledge that is known, knowledge that is distinctive to a discreet set of circumstances, and knowledge that may be transferable to other sets of circumstances with like precipitators or like time frames or like themes of importance and experience, but always within the framework of the grief process. The Siblings of 9/11 have set the bar and have set a standard in the longitudinal

sweep of their individual journeys. Coming out the other side is not the goal. They didn't know that in the beginning. They know it now. What they have learned is that surviving, remembering and functioning as close to a whole human being as possible has always been the goal. They have reached that goal in ways that are still evolving. These are the stories of 11 individuals who experienced adult sibling grief in the 11 years after September 11, 2001. There are other stories to be heard and there will be a twelfth year and a thirteenth year.....

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APPENDIX A



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

College of Education and Human Services
Department of Counseling and Educational
Leadership

Voice: 973-655-7184

CONSENT FORM FOR ADULTS

Please read below with care. You can ask questions at any time, now or later. You can talk to other people before you sign this form.

Study's Title: Adult Sibling Grief in the 10 Years after September 11, 2001

Why is this study being done? The specific aim of this study is to explore the grief process of 9/11 siblings over the ten years after 9/11; to allow you to tell your story of your experience as you lived it. Within that context, the study seeks to ascertain the use of, understand the meaning of continuing bonds (CB), that is, the ways you may have maintained an unbroken connection to your deceased sibling to allow for an emotional proximity in the absence of physical proximity. It may be in the form of memories, metaphors, objects, rituals and other means for healthy grief resolution.

What will happen while you are in the study? Upon reading and signing this informed consent form, we will make an arrangement for an interview. You will be asked to fill out a form providing certain demographic information about you and about your sibling. After completing the demographic section, we will begin arrange for an interviews based on a discussion guide prepared beforehand. The interview will have a conversational tone and be focused on your grief journey over the past 10 years. At certain points, I may probe for deeper meaning. The interview will be audiotaped and transcribed. The audio file will be kept on a private, password protected computer and transcriptions will be locked in a cabinet. Both the computer and the cabinet are in my private office to which no one will have access. There can be a follow up interview to clarify or elaborate on some of your responses, as well as to provide you with an opportunity to review my findings.

Time: The interview will last approximately 90 minutes. If there is a second interview, it will last approximately one hour.

Risks: I do not anticipate any risks to you, the participant, in this study. You may experience some emotional reactions to the questions asked, the responses given or the

memories that may be activated. You will be given time to recompose if necessary. You should not experience any long-term ill-effects as a result of your participation.

Benefits: You may benefit from this study in that you will be able to process your personal journey through grief process and understand the way your life has been affected in ways you have not considered before. You may also gain insight and knowledge about the manner in which you utilized continuing bonds that had been obscured by your grief.

Who will know that you are in this study? You will not be linked to any presentations or reporting nor will anyone know of your participation in this study. We will keep who you are confidential. Once you have completed the interview, your demographic information and the audiotape will be coded so that there is no identifying information and it cannot be traced to you. Therefore, once the materials have been collected and we have left the interview, no one will be able to identify your interview materials from that of other participants.

Do you have to be in the study?

You do not have to be in this study. You are a volunteer! It is okay if you want to stop at any time and not be in the study. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer. Nothing will happen to you.

Do you have any questions about this study? You may wish to contact me, the researcher, for this study, Vincent S. Viglione (viglionev@mail.montclair.edu) or 201-572-7173 or my faculty sponsor, Dr. Catherine Roland (rolandc@mail.montclair.edu) or 973-655-7184.

Do you have any questions about your rights? Phone or email the IRB Chair, Dr. Debra Zellner (reviewboard@mail.montclair.edu or 973-655-4327).

It is okay to use my data in other studies:

Please initial: _____ Yes _____ No

It is okay to audiotape me while I am in this study:

Please initial: _____ *Yes* _____ *No*

One copy of this consent form is for you to keep.

Statement of Consent

I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. Its general purposes, the particulars of involvement, and possible risks and inconveniences have been explained to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw at any time. My signature also indicates that I am 18 years of age or older and have received a copy of this consent form.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Print your name here	Sign your name here	Date
<u>Vincent S. Viglione</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Name of Principal Investigator	Signature	Date
<u>Dr. Catherine B. Roland</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
Name of Faculty Sponsor	Signature	Date

APPENDIX B



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

*College of Education and Human
Services*

Department of Counseling and
Educational Leadership

Voice: 973-655-7184

Introductory Script

Hello, my name is Vincent Viglione and I am a doctoral candidate for a Ph.D. in Counselor Education and the researcher in the proposed study. For purposes of this study, I will be speaking with individuals who have lost a sibling in the attacks of September 11, 2001. As you may know, spouses, children and parents of 9/11 victims have consistently been in the forefront of media reporting and support efforts. 9/11 siblings are rarely, if ever, considered. Participation in this study may elicit painful memories of an extremely difficult time in your life, but it may also allow you to fully process the very personal journey you have been on these past ten years.

The aim of this study is to explore the grief process of 9/11 siblings over the ten years period after 9/11. A secondary aim of this study is to ascertain the use of, understand the meaning of and qualify the nature of continuing bonds (CB) that may have been utilized during that ten year period. CB refers to a concept that emphasizes the need of bereaved to seek and sustain bonds with the deceased in terms of memories, objects, metaphors and interactions for healthy grief resolution and recognizes that severing such bonds is not necessarily conducive to that resolution. CB may help to maintain an unbroken connection to the deceased sibling and allow for an emotional proximity in the absence of physical proximity.

Your participation will be in the form of an interview. It will have a conversational tone that will enable me to understand at how 9/11 siblings have dealt with the grief process over the last decade, to what degree they have come to terms with their sibling's death, what circumstances may have complicated resolution and the manner in which they were able to keep the memories of their siblings intact.

If you agree to participate, you will be given an informed consent form detailing the nature of the study and your part in it, as well as a short demographic questionnaire to complete that asks you to provide certain background information about you and your sibling (gender, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, etc.). We will then make arrangement to get together for an interview at either my office or a private place of your convenience. I estimate that the interview will take approximately 90 minutes. Depending on the quality of responses, there may be a follow up conversation of a shorter duration. Interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. All information will be kept confidential and anonymous. Responses, forms and audio recordings will not contain your name, but a code instead. The final reporting will bear no identifiable references to your or you sibling. All relevant materials will kept in a locked filing cabinet in the

researcher's private office and will be seen only by the researcher. Your participation is entirely voluntary. You do not have to participate in this if you do not wish to, although I hope you will and you may withdraw at any time. No one will be aware of your participation unless you personally wish to disclose that information.

It may be important for you to know that I worked in the shadow of the World Trade Center Twin Towers for 25 years and watched them being built. I, too, have suffered a loss that day which I am willing to share with you if you so desire. I have an interest in this topic both personally and professionally. I appreciate your time and would be happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

APPENDIX C



MONTCLAIR STATE
UNIVERSITY

*College of Education and Human
Services*

Department of Counseling and
Educational Leadership

Voice: 973-655-7184

Demographic Survey

About you:

1. Gender: Female_____ Male_____

2. Age on 9/11/01:_____

3. Race: Caucasian_____ African-American_____

Asian _____ Hispanic _____

Native American_____

Other_____

4. Marital Status: On 9/11/01 Currently

Married_____ Married_____

Divorced_____ Divorced_____

Single_____ Single_____

Widowed_____ Widowed_____

Long-term commitment_____ Long-term

commitment_____

5. Highest level of education:

6. Employment: On 9/11/01 Currently

_____/

7. Religious affiliation: Catholic_____ Jewish_____

Muslim_____ Protestant_____

Hindu_____

Other_____

8. Level of participation in services at your church/synagogue/mosque/etc.:

<u>Before 9/11/01</u>	<u>Current</u>
2-3 times/week_____	2-3 times/week_____
Once a week_____	Once a week_____
2-3 times/month_____	2-3 times/month_____
Once a month _____	Once a month_____
Occasionally_____	Occasionally _____
No participation_____	No participation_____

Demographic Information *continued*

About your sibling:

9. Gender: Female_____ Male_____

10. Age on 9/11/01: _____

11. Marital Status: On 9/11/01
 Married_____

 Divorced_____

 Single_____

 Widowed_____

 Long-term commitment_____

12. Children: #_____ Ages on

9/11/01:_____

13. Highest level of education: _____

14. Reason your sibling was involved in 9/11:

Work:_____ If so, type_____

First Responder_____if so, type_____

Travel: _____ If so, flight # _____

Other (explain) : _____

APPENDIX D

Discussion Guide

("Hello, thanking for participating today. I want to give you an idea of what we will be doing in the next hour and a half or so. I will be asking a series of open ended questions

- 1. about your experiences with the events of 9/11,*
- 2. about the personal the loss you suffered*
- 3. about the ways you dealt with your grief.*
- 4. the ways in which you have kept your sibling's memory alive*
- 5. and how that process has changed over time*

Some of these questions may be difficult for you. If at any time, it becomes too difficult or there is something you'd rather not go into, please let me know and we will either skip it or stop. Are you ready to begin?

Introductory Questions:

1. Who was it you lost that day?
2. Describe what it was like for you where you first heard of the attacks of 9/11.

Probe: Where were you? What were you doing? Were you alone or with someone?

3. When did you first realize your brother/sister may have been involved?

Probe: How did you find out? Your reaction? What did you do? Who did you call?

"Victim" "missing" "Dead" "Hope"

4. Why was your brother/sister there?

Possibilities: worked there / visiting / first responder / other

"Grand Tour" question

5. Describe for me what it was like to lose your brother/sister on 9/11

Probes:

- *Relationship*
- *Functioning*
 - *Emotional*
 - *Physical*
 - *Cognitive*

- *Behavioral*
- *What reaction did you get from people when you told them your brother/sister died on 9/11?*
 - *What emotions did that bring up?*
- *How do you think a sibling relationship is different from other relationships?*
- *Were you notified about recovery efforts? Tell me about that.*
 - *Was there recovery/remains?*
 - *Where do you go to grieve? Where do you feel the strongest connection?*
 - *How was that different from any other loss in your life?*
 - *Where do you go to grieve?*
- *How were services for your brother/sister handled? What was that like for you?*
 - *Your part in that process?*
- *How did you deal with all the media attention around 9/11 and its aftermath?*
 - *Did you watch the news?*
 - *Were there good parts? Were there parts that upset you?*
 - *What was the constant replaying of the event like for you?*
 - *Were you ever interviewed? Tell me about that.*

Support Systems

6. Who do you consider to be your support system during this time?

Probes:

- *Other siblings*
- *Others who shared your grief*
 - *With whom were you comfortable sharing your grief?*
 - *Who was the main contact person? How was that for you?*
- *Outside of Family*
- *Self-help groups? Bereavement groups? Clergy? Other?*

- *Unexpected sources of support?*
- *Where any of these helpful?*
- Do you know of anyone else who died on 9/11? How did that affect you?
 - *Different? How so?*

Coping Style

7. How would you characterize your coping style?

- *What helped?*
- *When was it most difficult?*
- *How is talking about it/him/her?*
- *Religion/Spirituality?*

Continuing Bonds

8. What were the ways you maintained a connection to your sibling?

Probes:

- *Things you did*
 - *Lit candles, created a shrine, displayed pictures, golf outings, fund-raisers*
- *Things you wore*
 - *Bracelets, lockets, Memorial t-shirts, tattoos,*
- *Things you created*
 - *Music, poetry, art, foundations/scholarships*
- *Things you avoided*
- *Where there times after 9/11 when you had some sense of the presence of your sibling?*
 - *Can you talk about the circumstances? What was that like for you?*

Milestones

9. During this latter period, were you aware of any changes occurring in you?

Probe:

- *What changes do you notice? Functioning?*
 - *To what do you attribute these changes?*

- *Had your support system changed?*
- *What are your thoughts about milestones since 9/11?*
 - *What was each successive anniversary of 9/11 like for you?*
 - *Did you attend memorials? public? private?*
 - *Did you listen to the reading of the names?*
 - *Did you ever consider being a reader the year siblings read?*
 -

Ground Zero

10. Do you ever go down to “ground zero”?

Probes:

- *What was that like for you?*
- *How do you view the site?*
- *What does it mean to you?*
- *Connection to Ground Zero?*
 - *Entitlement / Ownership / Unique*
 - *Has your view of Ground Zero changed over time?*

Summarize answers/themes in previous questions. 2. Honor and thank participant.
(“I’d now like to move to the present and ask you about what’s going on in your life now.”)

10th Anniversary

11. Considering there was a commemoration of the 10th anniversary of 9/11, how did that affect you?

Probes:

- *Was it different? How so?*
- *Some might say, “It has been 10 years – enough!” What do you say to that?*

(“I’m winding down now – just a few more questions. Are you OK? Are there questions in your mind that I have not asked or are there things you feel you’d like to add?”)

12. Can you summarize what your 10 year journey has been like?

Probes:

- *How have you changed? How so?*
 - *Values*
 - *Friendships*
 - *Safety*
 - *Worldview*

13. We often hear people use the word “closure” when they talk about grief. How do you feel when you hear that word? What does that word mean to you?

Probes:

- *Have you / can you reach closure?*
- *What will that look / feel like for you?*

14. Recently, we heard the news that Osama bin Laden has been killed. How did that affect you? What did it mean to you?

15. What would your brother/sister say about all that has occurred over the past 10 years?

16. Tell what it felt like today, to sit here and talk about your journey.

APPENDIX E

Profiles of the Siblings of 9/11

Nora

Nora was interviewed via Skype. She is a 50 year old married, white female with a high school education and of Irish descent. She was 39 years old on 9/11 and lost her younger brother, Greg, who was 35 years old. She characterizes herself as a stay-at-home mom with three children who ranged in age from 7 to 11 years old on 9/11. Nora and her husband lived then and continue to live in a suburban setting several counties outside of New York City and had little, if any, opportunity to travel to New York. Her recollection is that she was not “savvy” about the city or about the World Trade Center other than it was an important building. She also considers that she was naïve and innocent about the world and paid little attention to world affairs. Her local community was her world and her children to be her life and purpose.

Nora was extremely comfortable throughout the interview process. She appeared to be intelligent and thoughtful with a high level of awareness, confidence in what she had to say and a clear memory of the details of the early days. Nora is a practicing Catholic and states that her faith has been consistent throughout. It gives her a great deal of comfort.

Nora is the oldest of four siblings all of which are 2 years apart in age. The next oldest is a brother with whom she feels she has never had a close relationship. The next is Greg who she “adored” and the last is her sister with whom she has always had a close relationship and with whom she has always spoken to regularly. Nora’s parents have been

divorced for some time. She is extremely close with her mother, lives within thirty minutes and sees her often. Nora says her father “lives in a different part of the state”. He was alive during the events of 9/11, but has since died. She says no more about him and he doesn’t appear at any point in her narrative.

Greg was a New York City Firefighter who was about to end his shift on the morning of 9/11. He was not married and did not have children. Greg had dinner with his younger sister at the firehouse the night before and that younger sister spoke with Nora on the morning of 9/11 to recount the great time they had. Nora reports a close and loving relationship among those 3 siblings. All were close and in constant contact with their mother. Greg’s body was recovered on January 1st, 2002. Nora’s mother had been visiting Ground Zero that day and was present for the recovery her of son’s body. For Nora, 1/1/02 is more significant than 9/11/01.

Rose

Rose was interviewed in person. She is 52 year old, married, Asian-American woman with a master’s degree in Computer Science. Rose’s father was of Irish decent and he was a 22 year veteran of the U.S. Army. Her mother is Korean. As a result of her father’s army career, Rose and her family moved every two years while growing up. She was 41 years old on 9/11 when she lost her younger brother, Peter, who was 11 months younger than her. She jokingly refers to her brother and herself as “Irish twins.” Rose was initially hesitant, but soon warmed up to the prospect of talking about Peter. At certain points in her narrative, she appeared overwhelmed and paused to cry. Rose used half a box of tissues, blowing her nose often.

Rose lives with her husband and three children (now 23, 20 and 17) in a town in central New Jersey. She disclosed that she doesn't expect to be with her husband for much longer. She stopped working when her children were born and has recently begun her own design business. At the time of 9/11, her husband had lost his job five months earlier and there was little income. That coupled with her father's health issues and her recent hernia surgery left her feeling "out of sorts" and complaining she couldn't take one more thing. That morning she had a premonition that something bad was going to happen which she attributed to fear over her father's health.

Besides Peter, Rose had an older brother by two and a half years who worked at the Pentagon. On 9/11, her initial concern was for him, but he was off from work that day. Because Peter was only 11 months younger, there was a special bond between the two of them. They were always in the same grade in the same school with the same friends and because their family moved so often, they grew up consistently in each other's company as though they were twins. People thought of them as twins. As Asian-Americans, they suffered the same harassments in school and became the main source of support for each other. Rose's father died in September of 2004, so that month has an added significance for her.

Peter worked for a national company and moved quite often as part of his job. He was married and had one daughter. His wife was 8 months pregnant on 9/11. He had just moved to Massachusetts one month prior and was flying to California on business. He flew on United Flight 175, the second plane to hit the Twins Towers. Through DNA

sampling, a bone matching their DNA was recovered. The family had a funeral. Rose has a distressing, yet poignant memory of her mother caressing the bone.

Ted

Ted is interviewed via Skype. Ted is a 53 year old, married, college educated, white male with three children. He lives in Virginia and works in the defense industry near the Pentagon. He is the sibling of another participant, Lisa, and presents on his experience from a very different perspective. Ted has been diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) and has been told he has from two to three years to live. Other than that initial disclosure, there is no other indication of his illness in either his narrative or his demeanor. He spoke with candor about his difference of opinion with his sister. He spoke easily about the events of 9/11 as they pertained to him and his family with whom he stayed during the early weeks. The fact that he does not live in the Tri-state area gave his account a different feel. The Pentagon attack was more present in his area of the country and most of the people with whom he was in contact had a defense industry task-oriented mind set. Ted tended to smile and chuckle often at some of the things he said, sometimes in ways that were incongruent with his story. It was noted that much of that laughter seemed to have a ring of irony.

Ted is the second oldest of four sibling with his sister being the oldest. He lost his "little brother," Paul, on 9/11. Paul was seven years younger. Ted made a tangential reference to losing another brother to HIV in 1988. While Ted remains stoic about his condition, he intimated that it may have a great bearing on his parents and his sister who have already lost two members of the immediate family, both sons and brothers. Ted's

relationship with his brother, Paul, blossomed over the last two or three years before Paul's death when the seven year gap in age seemed less apparent. In those last years, Ted and Paul fished and played basketball together which was a passion for both. They sang in choruses in college and Ted cantered at Paul's memorial. Ted could not recall the song, but did recall that he could not continue at the word "brother. His daughter picked it up for him. Since Paul's death, Ted no longer does any of those things. Nevertheless, he presents as upbeat and "mission oriented" which he ascribes to his standing in the defense industry: "find out what needs to be done and do it." He attributes that attitude to his ability to move through the grief process in an efficient manner. Ted feels his sister (Lisa) and his parents are always sad and crying and that many people tend to shy away from them. Ted continues to remain close to Paul's wife who has remarried and seems to take delight in the fact that Paul's children say he sounds exactly like their dad.

Paul had just started working at a firm on the 94th floor of the World Trade Center two weeks prior to 9/11. He had gone into work earlier than usual that day because he was making an important presentation. There was no recovery except for Paul's driver's license that arrived in the mail several years later. It was slightly weathered, but otherwise in perfect shape. There was no note in the envelope, just the license.

Lisa

Lisa was interviewed in person. She is a 54 year old, retired, white female with two master's degrees in information technology. She was going through a divorce just prior to 9/11. She does not have any children. She lives in central New Jersey with her second husband and their dog. Her parents live in Florida. Lisa is the oldest of four

siblings, the first three of which were born within a three year period. She has three brothers. The youngest brother and fourth sibling, Paul, was born several years later when all his siblings were older. Lisa states he was practically raised as an only child. Paul started a new job in the World Trade Center in August of 2001. The second youngest brother died of AIDS in 1988. Her last surviving brother, Ted, is two years younger than her and works at the Pentagon. On 9/11, she had two brothers in buildings that were targeted by terrorists. Ted has Lou Gehrig's disease. He was also interviewed for this study.

Lisa told her story with great dramatic flair, a rising and falling voice, many pauses, expressive whispers and punctuating her narrative with inflection. At times, she appeared shocked by what she was saying and at other times, her voice was menacing. She cried throughout the interview stating she always cries, but "it's OK." Lisa rocked in the chair while speaking, and alternately snapped her watch open and closed and twisted tissues. She often interrupted and spoke over the researcher when she had a thought.

Lisa's life has been impacted by greatly by the deaths of two brothers and the impending death of the third. Her main concern is and has been for her parents and for the two children of Paul who also live in Florida. Paul's widow has remarried, but Lisa's parents can see the children often. Lisa, for her part, has no contact with her brother's widow. She states matter-of-factly that she has no friends, but doesn't need any as long as she has her dog.

Ann

Ann was interviewed in person. She is a 64 year old, white, college educated, married female. Ann is a retired editor and has no children. She lives in northern New Jersey with her husband who is also retired. Ann's mother is 89 years old and still lives alone in Brooklyn. Ann is greatly concerned about her mother who is very active and has been giving tours at the Tribute Center across from Ground Zero.

Ann was bright and lively throughout the interview. She is an attractive woman, very fashionably dressed, wore matching accessories and she smiled and laughed often talking in an excited and somewhat straightforward, if not exuberant way. She was the only participant who seemed quite comfortable and at ease with her loss attributing her healthy and speedy passage through the grief process to her strong faith.

Ann was one of two participants who had lost a sister. Her sister, Jesse, was 49 years old on 9/11 and was an assistant vice-president on the 94th floor of the World Trade Center. Ann is the only participant who did not talk about having hope in the first days and weeks. To her, Jesse had died immediately and was in God's hands. This, she avers, is an indisputable fact.

Jesse had gotten married later in life and had no children. Her husband had been married and divorced and had 2 grown children of his own. Ann referred to Jesse's husband as "quirky" and "weird" several times in the interview. He had received a great deal of money to which Ann's mother felt she was entitled to part. A law suit ensued and in a final disposition, a relatively small sum was disbursed to her mother. All contact with

Jesse's husband was severed within two years of 9/11. Jesse's remains were not recovered.

Ben

Ben was interviewed in person. He is a 58 year old, married, white, college educated male. Ben has no children. He is one of five siblings. One sister is older and two sisters are younger than him. He lost his brother, Karl, the youngest of the siblings. Karl was 36 years old on 9/11. He was married with two children, ages four and two. Karl worked on 99th floor of the North Tower. He was partially recovered.

Ben characterizes his journey as "prolonged grief." He is adamant that there can be no end, no resolution. His brother's death was "yesterday and tomorrow." Ben is also the angriest of the participations having lost confidence in the government and feeling less patriotic as a result. He wants answers and continually asks "why" questions and insists that he has been denied due process of the law to face the accused. He has problems with semantics, i.e. words like "victim" and "hero." To him, Karl was simply murdered and he fervently believes it could have been prevented. He watches video tapes of the planes crashing into the Twin Towers over and over because that, to him, represents the exact moment his brother died.

Ben talks to only one of his sisters and calls his family fragmented except for his relationship with his brother. That, he says, was wholesome. His parents are in their nineties and do not talk about 9/11.

Ben lost contact with his brother's wife and children early, within the first two years, and feels she dishonored his brother's memory by allowing her new boyfriend to

move into his brother's house fourteen months later. They have moved out of state and now have three additional children. Ben resents that it was so easy for her to "move on" and attributes it to the monetary "pay off" she received. He does not consider himself an activist, but continually writes letters to the editors of local newspapers to complain about governmental cover-ups and to his congressional representatives asking for more information.

Ben was referred by the facilitator of the sibling bereavement group. He was the only male member of the group and knew Lena, Casey and Loraine, but did not know they were participants in this study. He referred to Loraine by name in the interview.

Lena

Lena was interviewed in person. She is a 61 year old, white, single female. She was never been married. She is the youngest of three siblings who are 2 years apart in age. The older of her two brothers, Walter, died on 9/11. Lena came into the interview stating that she wouldn't have much to say. While she did need a bit of prompting to tell her story, her memory of the events of the last 11 years was clear and substantial. She stopped often to think about what she wanted to say and frequently went back to elaborate further on some point already mentioned.

Walter was 54 years old on 9/11, was married and had two sons, the younger was in his senior year of college and the older was working in Florida. Walter worked on the 105th floor of the World Trade Center. Lena's sister-in-law did not have siblings, so Lena fulfilled that role. Unlike the other participants, she was present at every event and occasion and accompanied her sister-in-law to all meetings including those about

funding. From her account, her sister-in-law became very dependent on her. All information was instantly available to her and she was involved in the decision making process including memorial and funeral services. She continues to celebrate holidays and birthdays with her brother's family.

Lena's sister-in-law moved into a house the family owned in Florida and began dating three years ago. Lena seems happy to report that her sister-in-law now has a boyfriend who "has passed the muster" of her nephews. Her greatest joy is that her family has remained intact, if not grown stronger and closer.

Lena's biggest concern is that everyone in her family from her grandfather on down died at very young age. She feels she may not have long to live though she reports no illness. Her other concern revolves around thoughts of who she would be today if 9/11 didn't happen.

Walter was partially recovered. Lena was housesitting while her sister-in-law was in Florida when a state trooper and a priest came to the door to report the find. Walter's partial remains were cremated and placed in an urn that Lena visits regularly. Subsequently, the family has been notified of two additional recoveries of body parts. They are waiting for some sense of finality before they cremate the remaining parts and reopen the urn.

Lena was referred by the facilitator of the sibling bereavement group. She knew Ben, Casey and Loraine, but did not know they were participants in this study.

Casey

Casey was interviewed in person. She is a 55 year old, white, Jewish female who described herself as a stay-at-home mom. She has two children: 18 (male) and 14 (female) and lives in an exclusive suburb in New Jersey. She is currently in the process of divorcing her husband and moving out of state.

Casey is the third of four daughters. Her two older sisters are 59 and 57 years old and live in other parts of the country as far away as the west coast. She lost her younger sister, Dena, who was 35 when she died on 9/11. Despite the nine year difference, Casey and Dena were very close. Initially, Casey considered Dena as her own child as Casey took care of her and pampered her as a baby and young child. Even as a teenager and young adult, Casey said she took Dena everywhere with her. Casey's older sisters were not very close to Dena because of distance and age difference.

Casey came into the interview eager and excited. She brought a shopping bag of framed pictures to show. She says she has to "have a visual." Most of the photos were older pictures of Dena as a child and as a young adult with Casey's young children. Casey seemed oblivious to the researcher's questions and launching into a monologue that could have continued for hours. In the process, she answered all of the researcher's questions and then some. She said she would not go to Ground Zero for fear of her own safety. She felt it was still a terrorist target. At one point, Casey intimated that her pending divorce had its roots in 9/11 and in her husband's response to her grief. She talked about the deep depression she was in during the early years and how her husband

was unmoved. She began to then complain bitterly about his lack of empathy, caught herself and stopped abruptly.

Casey is not sure of the floor on which Dena had worked, but believes it was “somewhere in the nineties.” Dena was married and they were “considering children” around the time of 9/11. Casey’s greatest regret is not seeing Dena’s children. Casey’s relationship with Dena’s husband was very good prior to 9/11, but it deteriorated quickly after. Getting information from Dean’s husband was difficult and he often became angry when she asked questions. In the end, he told Casey that Dena’s body had been recovered “intact.” It had been several months later and she was doubtful if that was true. She could get no further information from him. She will not visit the grave. Dena’s husband has since gotten remarried and has children. Casey has mended relations with him and, in fact, he has become her financial adviser as her divorce settlement reaches conclusion.

Casey was referred by the facilitator of the sibling bereavement group. She knew Ben, Lena and Loraine, but did not know they were participants in this study.

Mary

Mary was the only participant interviewed by phone. Mary is a 50 year old, white, college educated, divorced female with two teenage children. She lives in southern New Jersey.

Mary lost her only sibling, her younger brother, Sal, on 9/11 and now sees herself as an only child. Just prior to her loss, she had worked part time in a salon. Mary suffers from fibromyalgia and degenerative disc disease and says she had been in constant pain for two years prior to 9/11. As a result, she had to give up her job. Her husband at the

time had been laid off from work. The family was in great turmoil because of the mounting financial pressures and health issues of Mary and her elderly parents. Those pressures were taking a toll on her marriage.

Mary seemed buoyant and friendly. The interview had been scheduled and cancelled many times because of conflicts in Mary's schedule which she laughed about in an embarrassed way. She spoke with a conspiratorial air as though she and the researcher had a storied past as a result of the many communications.

Sal was 38 years old on 9/11 and left his wife and three children, a set of twins and a 3 month old boy. He was a "rising star" at his company, as well as the "glue that held his family together." She ponders the serendipity of it all because just prior to getting laid off, her husband also had worked in the World Trade Center.

Sal's death seemed to be a tipping point for Mary, the "one more thing" she had feared that came to pass as an all-consuming sadness in her life. The turmoil she encountered centered not only on the loss of her brother, but on the "tailspin" her parents were in and uneasy relationship that began to develop with her sister-in-law, a relationship that she always assumed would be stable and permanent. The fact that it seemed to fall apart so quickly added to the surreal turn her life was taking.

Loraine

Loraine was interviewed in person. She is a 62 year old, white, married female with two adult children living in New Jersey. Loraine is retired from the local school district and had been active in community affairs prior to a car accident. Loraine was calm and spoke in measured tones. There was a resigned air in the way she told her story

imparting an image of one who has been through much and who has learned much. She appeared philosophical in the telling.

Loraine lost her “baby brother,” Tim, on 9/11. He was a New York City Firefighter. On 9/11, she thought first of her oldest son who was working in Manhattan in the financial district at the time. She spent the day trying frantically to get in touch with him, but couldn’t get through. He was still on the PATH train from New Jersey to New York City when the first plane hit the North Tower. The PATH train was rerouted to midtown Manhattan where he detrained and began walking downtown at which point he witnessed the second plane hitting the South Tower. Several blocks north of the World Trade Center, he saw the buildings collapse and fled north on foot. She only found out that he was unharmed the next day when he was able to call. He had walked to his grandmother’s house in Brooklyn. By that time, she knew her brother, his uncle, was missing.

Tim was 44 years old on 9/11 and left a wife and two small children. He had been a veteran of NYFD for 17 years and was looking towards his 20 year retirement to pursue a second career in home construction. He had finished his shift that morning and was about to head home when his house got the call.

Loraine had another brother two years older than her. Tim was eight years younger than her. She was not particularly close to her older brother, but spent much of her adolescent and teenage years caring for Tim as both her parents worked. Loraine quickly descended into a deep depression that lasted for more than two years that included individual and group therapy, as well as psychotropic medications. The events

of 9/11 shook her Catholic faith and she said she was angry at God for many years. She was very clear about the time she began to emerge from her depression nearly eight years later.

Loraine was referred by the facilitator of the sibling bereavement group. She knew Ben, Lena and Casey, but did not know they were participants in this study. She referred to Casey by name in the interview.

Jack

Jack was interviewed via Skype. He is a 54 year old white, married, graduate educated, Jewish male with one son. His daughter hadn't been yet born on 9/11. He owns his own public relations firm and generally works from a home office in a rural area of New York State. Jack presented as intelligent and thoughtful. His background in public relations came through clearly as he spoke in a poised and deliberate way.

Jack lost his younger brother, Jerry, on 9/11. Jerry was a partner at law firm whose offices were one and half blocks from the World Trade Center. He was a volunteer fire-fighter and EMT in his home town, so upon becoming aware of the attacks, he evacuated people from his own building and immediately headed over to the World Trade Center to help the first responders there. He had also responded to the attack on the Twin Towers in 1993.

Jerry was 40 years old on 9/11 and was not married, nor did he have children. As such, Jerry's parents became the official points of contact for all information, a role they quickly ceded to Jack. Jack's first function was to organize a memorial when Mayor Giuliani announced it was no longer a rescue operation, but one of recovery. Jack began

to research as to what a Jewish family should do in a situation. Should they sit Shivah?

There was no body and no burial. He researched extensively and conferred with his orthodox rabbi uncle though his family was, at best, reformed though not very religious at all. He found a precedent based on what was done for Holocaust victims whose remains were never recovered.

Though Jack has one older brother by 5 years, he had been very close to his younger brother, Jerry, having had the same friends, having shared a bedroom at home and having their undergraduate years overlapping at the same university. Because Jerry lived and died in the service of others, Jack knew he had to get something done for his brother. With a close friend, he co-founded an organization to work for others in conjunction with an initiative to promote acts of service every 9/11. He has become very active in several 9/11 organizations and initiatives. He has worked with Jerry's former law firm raising funds to build relief sculpture that memorializes the fire-fighters who died on 9/11 as well as his brother, Jerry, the only volunteer fire-fighter to perish. On the 10th anniversary of 9/11, the "My Good Deed" website recorded the good deeds of 30 million people in 165 countries engaged in a day of service to others.

